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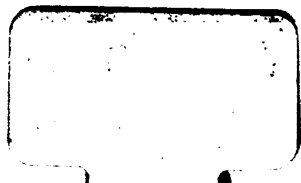
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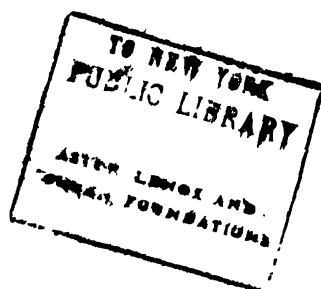
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With the word " John " on my lips I faced the door

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BEATRICE OF DENEWOOD

A SEQUEL TO "THE LUCKY SIXPENCE"

BY
EMILIE BENSON KNIPE
AND
ALDEN ARTHUR KNIPE

ILLUSTRATED BY
C. M. RELYEA



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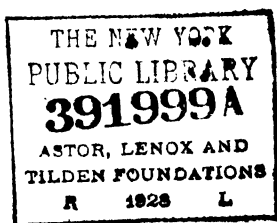
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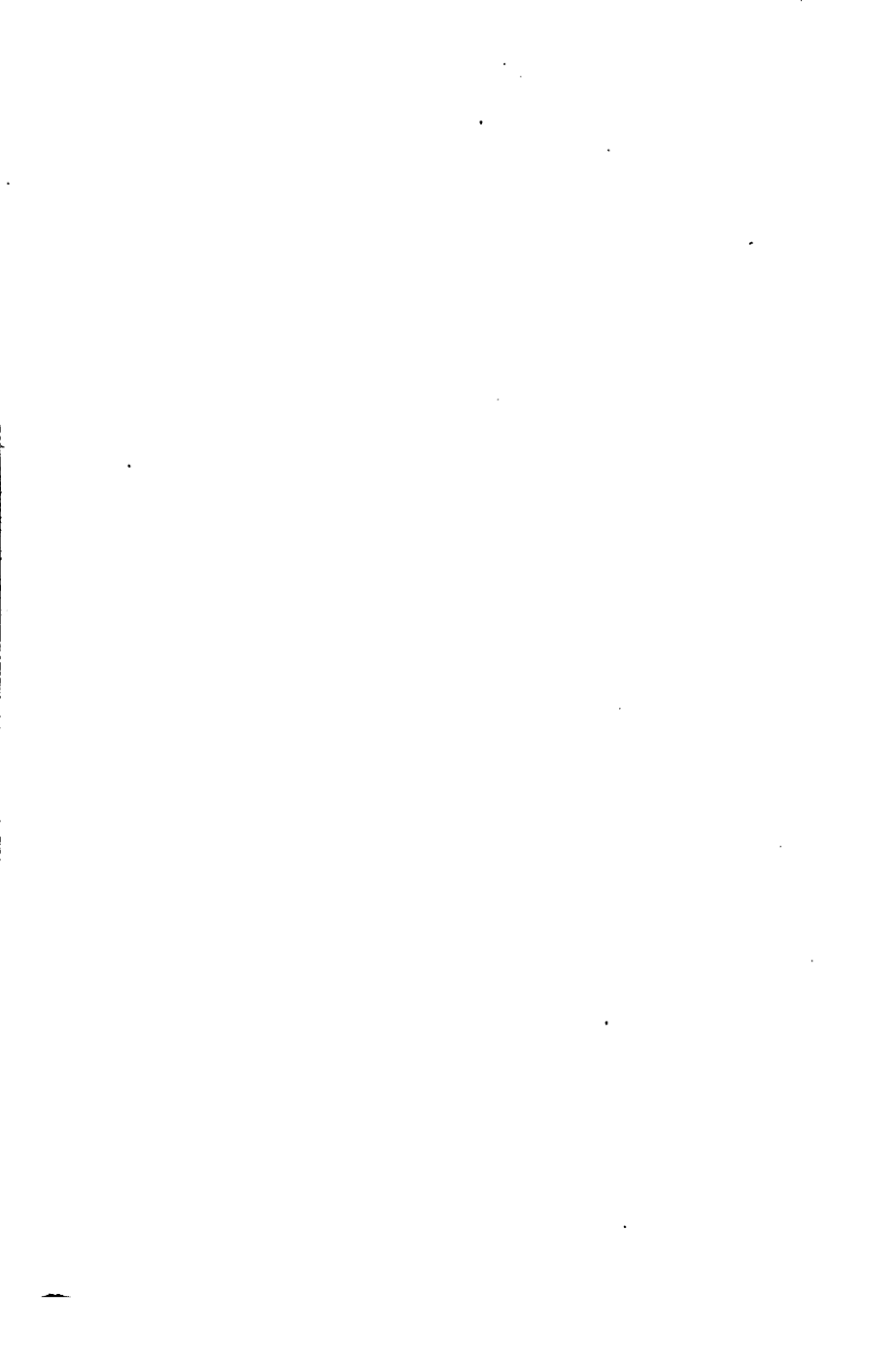
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**BEATRICE
OF DENEWOOD**



BEATRICE OF DENEWOOD

CHAPTER I

BART FINDS A HESSIAN

THERE now," exclaimed Mrs. Mummer, my cousin John Travers's housekeeper, as she straightened up and regarded the huge brass andirons with pride. "I've polished and rubbed them till my back aches, but it's worth it, to see Denewood beginning to look like itself again."

I stepped down from the chair upon which I had been standing while I gave a finishing touch to the mirror, and glanced about the great hall with much pleasure and satisfaction. A week before, the news of the battle of Monmouth had reached us and, feeling assured that the British army had left Philadelphia for good, the entire household had been busy putting things to rights. We wanted the place to look particularly fine against

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the arrival of its owner who was expected back at any time, and with Mummer, the steward of the estate, to drive the blacks out of doors, while Mrs. Mummer saw to it that all inside the house worked their hardest, we had accomplished wonders. Even Polly and Betty Travers, cousins to Mr. Travers, did their share, and little Peggy, their sister, wished to sleep with a duster clutched in her fist to be ready on the morrow.

"'T is Mummer we have to thank that there is aught left," Mrs. Mummer went on. "'T was his foresight that bade me hide all that was worth stealing before we laid eyes on a bloody-back."

"How did M-m-m-mummer k-know the B-british were s-s-such thieves?" stuttered Peggy, looking like a small sprite, as she popped her head from behind a stuffed chair she had been brushing.

"Was n't Mummer a soldier himself before he came to the Americas?" demanded Mrs. Mummer, bristling. "He knows soldiers right enough, does Mummer; though in sooth it was not the lobsters he was thinking of, so much as the Hessians. Their very music says 'plunder! plunder! plunder!' in good plain English. Ah, Miss Bee,

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if you had been to town and seen the mess they 've made of it!" and she held up her hands to express her horror.

"D-d-did they s-s-steal the State House?" asked Peg with a little giggle.

Mrs. Mummer made a good-natured flap at her with the duster. "Nay, little mischief," she declared, "'t is still there. 'T was the dirt that 'mazed me. Such filth and flies!" She stopped, lacking words to express her disgust.

"I 'll warrant you would like to take a besom to the whole city," I laughed.

"Aye, that I would," she agreed, "and 't is a task that must be done or there will be sickness ere long. I am right glad we are in Germantown instead of in Philadelphia."

Sam and Tom, two of the black house-servants, came in bearing the Turkey carpet to cover the center of the hall floor, and in a minute we were all busy again, pulling the corners this way and that till it was settled to our satisfaction.

It was the end of our task. The house was in order, and we stood regarding it a moment in silence.

"Now it is as it was the first day I came to

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Denewood," I said half-aloud, for in truth I was thinking rather than talking.

"A lucky day for the house, that," declared Mrs. Mummer. "Ah, Miss Beatrice, how well I remember it! For weeks we had been waiting for a sight of the boy who was to come out of England and la! the boy turned out to be a girl. 'You have only to know her to love her,' says Master John, and 't was a true word he spoke, my dear."

"And that was only two years ago," I said, my thoughts still dwelling on the past; "only two years—and yet it seems as if I'd been here always."

"True enough," agreed Mrs. Mummer, "but such long years they've been! What with soldiers coming and going, and Master John hurt, and the battle of Germantown right over our heads, 't was no very pleasant welcome to a new land, for a little maid; but let us pray that the war is ended as they say. Are you never wishful to be back in England, Miss Bee?" she added with a note of anxiety in her voice.

"Never! Never! Never!" I cried, putting my arms about her, for Mrs. Mummer was like a

BART FINDS A HESSIAN

mother to me. "Denewood is my home and I want no other."

"Praise be for that!" answered the old house-keeper heartily. "Mummer has said a dozen times that although you and Master John but call each other brother and sister and are, in truth, only distant cousins, no real brother and sister could be closer the one to the other. 'T is a misfortune that so young a man should lack near kin, for 'blood is thicker than water,' Mummer says; and while he and I did our best, we were only dried-up old servants after all. So, though you were but a slip of a maid of twelve when you came to us, you brought the sunshine we needed to make a home of Denewood. You are the luck of the house, my dear. 'T is good to know you have no longing to go back to England."

"'T would be most ungrateful if I had, seeing all that Brother John has done for me," I replied.

"Nay, now," she answered, bristling a little, "the shoe is on the other foot, I'm thinking, for without you and your lucky sixpence Denewood would be ashes this day; so a truce to all this talk of gratitude, 'twixt you and Master John."

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It was all very well for Mrs. Mummer thus to dismiss the question of obligation between Cousin John Travers and myself, and such a thought would never enter his head either, but, nevertheless, all in that house were his guests, and I in particular owed him more than ever I could pay.

I was but a distant cousin and belonged to the English branch of the Travers family, having but small claim upon Brother John's generosity; yet, when two years before Granny, from lack of money to keep my two brothers and myself, was forced to send me to the Americas, John Travers had adopted me for a sister and placed me at the head of his household. Mrs. Mummer might say there should be no talk of gratitude between us, but I could not forget the kindness with which he had welcomed a forlorn little maid, and my heart overflowed with thankfulness that I had found so true a friend.

Some such thoughts as these were passing through my mind when they were interrupted by a shout from Peg, who was standing by the window.

"They've c-c-come! They've c-c-come!" she

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cried, and we heard the sounds of horses' hoofs beating the ground outside.

Goodness! what a clatter we made as we hastened to welcome the new arrivals. Polly and Betty came down the stairs in a rush. Little Peg ran to hide her duster, and Mrs. Mummer and I took one last glance about, to see that all was as it should be, before we hurried to the front door. Outside, with cries of joy, the stable boys scampered up to take the horses, and Mummer himself, with three or four of the farm hands, appeared, to give the master a welcome.

Two horsemen came galloping up the long driveway: in front, Cousin John Travers on a strong chestnut mare, and a little behind him Bart Travers, brother to Polly, Betty and Peg, putting his beast through its capers and showing off grandly before us all; for Bart was but a few months older than I, though he had run off to the war. Along they came at a smart pace, pulled up to a standstill, and in another minute John had dismounted and I was in his arms.

"Oh, brother!" I cried, "'t is fine to have you home again!"

"And 't is fine to be home, little sister!" he

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answered, kissing me and giving me a loving pat on the shoulder.

Meanwhile Peggy had run to Bart and the air was full of calls of welcome and questions flying back and forth as to how all fared.

Presently we all moved to enter the house, and as Brother John reached the threshold he stopped amazed. Then turning to Mrs. Mummer he shook a finger at her.

"'T is magic!" he cried. "'T is well for you we are past the age of such superstitions, for otherwise you were like to be burned for a witch."

"Nay, then, we should need a huge fire, for all of us have had a hand in the magic—though 't is Miss Bee who kept us slaving till it was finished," replied Mrs. Mummer with a laugh.

"But how have you done it?" he went on, his glance roving about the hall and lighting up as he noted one after another, the old familiar objects of furniture and ornament that had been hidden away from sight so that they might not tempt the Hessian soldiers. "There are the little Dresden figures on the mantel shelf just as they used to be and there is the old clock and—and the Turkey carpet! In truth I never hoped to see

BART FINDS A HESSIAN

all these things again, for I have passed places to-day where there was scarce one article of household use left to the owners!"

"For that you must thank Miss Bee and her lucky sixpence," said Mrs. Mummer with a nod.

"Aye, we'll never forget that!" answered Brother John warmly. "'T is when I see how others have suffered that I realize our good fortune. The country about us is in a sad case. Houses that I knew well have disappeared, with but a few charred stones left to mark their sites. Others are half-burned; some torn down in sheer wantonness or perchance for firewood, and everywhere ruin and poverty is the portion of Whig and Tory alike. I am filled with wonder that we escaped."

"Aye," cried Bart, striding about, with his great sword clanking as he moved. "This is all very well, but 't is the dining-room and its furnishings I'm most interested in. I'm fair starved, Mrs. Mummer, and that's the truth."

"'T is but a poor meal I can give you," said Mrs. Mummer, amid the laughter that followed Bart's sally, "but such as it is,—you have only to sit down, for all is ready."

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"Aye, I know your poor meals," cried Brother John, as we went into the dining-room. "I shall let out my belt two holes at least in anticipation."

And so, gaily and happily, we sat down to eat the first dinner we had all had together in peace and quiet for many a long day.

When the excitement had worn off a little, we began to ask questions of how our friends in the Continental army fared, and little Peg wanted particularly to have news of Allan McLane, who was captain of the troop of cavalry in which John served and a great favorite with us all. Then we asked for his Excellency, General Washington, and for the Marquis de Lafayette, news of whom made Polly and Betty prick up their ears, and for a host of others who at one time or another had stayed at Denewood during the dreadful winter just passed, when the army was freezing at Valley Forge and the British held Philadelphia.

"I s-s-say, B-b-bart," piped Peggy, in one of the pauses in the talk, "w-w-what w-will you d-d-do with your s-s-sword, now that the r-r-rascally B-b-british have g-g-gone and the w-w-war is over?"

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"Ah, but it is n't over," answered Bart.

"Not over?" I echoed in consternation, looking at Brother John. "Has n't the war ended?"

"Nay, Bee," he answered, "not yet, nor for many a long day, I fear."

"But every one says the British are going home," I insisted, for it was generally believed that the evacuation of Philadelphia was the beginning of the end.

"The wish is father to the thought in those who have spread that rumor," answered Brother John. "The British will scarce try their luck again in Philadelphia; but, for all that, the war is far from ended. General Clinton has but changed his base to New York."

"Should he do that often he will have no army left," Bart put in with a chuckle. "His expensive Hessians are still straggling over the Jerseys to us—and did n't we give them fits at Monmouth!"

Later, the dinner being finished, Mummer thrust his long, solemn face within the room and begged that John would go over the estate with him so that he might make ready his plans to repair the damage wrought by the soldiers. There was a new stable to be built, miles of fence

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were to be put up to replace those burned for fuel, and many other things were needed; for, outside, the place had not escaped so fortunately as the mansion itself.

Brother John went off with him, leaving us still at the table where we at once began to ply Bart with questions as to his doings with the Continental army.

"Nay!" cried Polly with a toss of her head. "I do not care to hear of Bart's bloody deeds. 'T is scarce fitting the ears of a sensitive female," and she got up and quitted the room, followed by Betty, for the two always acted in concert. Truth to tell, Polly, who was a few years older than the rest of us, put on such grown-up airs that we were often glad to be rid of her, for she and Betty seemed interested only in the fashions and talked of beaux and balls as if naught else in the world was of any consequence.

"A good riddance," said Bart, as they disappeared, "but I think their ears would not be so 'sensitive' if the news was of British victories. They are naught but silly Tories."

"And were you at Monmouth, Bart?" I asked, for it seemed scarce credible that a boy should

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have taken part in so bloody a battle as that one was rumored to have been.

"Aye, that I was, Bee," he answered proudly. "I think father did n't like the notion altogether; but I told him I would run away alone again, so he let me go with him."

"And are you a p-p-private, Bart?" asked Peg, a little breathlessly.

"Nay; I'm not a private," he replied.

"Then you must be an officer," I said.

"Nay, I'm not an officer, either—though I mean to have a commission soon," he went on. "I'm just a sort of aide to father, and, though some of the officers laugh at me, I have all the fun of fighting, just the same."

"T-tell us about the b-b-b-battle, B-bart," Peg demanded excitedly.

"Well," Bart began, "we were with General Wayne. 'Wayne the Drover' the army called him at Valley Forge, because, when worst came to worst, and we were near to starving, he always went off somewhere and brought in a herd of cattle to feed us. His own men call him 'Mad Anthony' because he loves to fight and stops at nothing; but his whole command is mad as far

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as that goes. Now as I said, we were with Wayne—but let me show you how it was.”

“Yes, do, Bart,” I entreated, and Peggy and I leaned half across the table as he told the story of the battle of Monmouth.

He cleared a space in front of him.

“Now this plum-cake platter is Monmouth Courthouse,” he began, arranging the things before him to represent the two armies and their positions. “And the fold in the table-cloth we’ll call the road leading to Sandy Hook where Clinton wanted to get, ’way up by this coffee cup. We were about *here*,” and he placed an apricot to mark the place. “Over there, where the sauce-boat stands, was Knyphausen protecting Clinton’s eight miles of baggage wagons—which we should have captured had it not been for Charles Lee, the traitor!”

“G-g-go on, B-b-bart,” cried Peggy, her chin in her hands gazing down intently, and hardly able to keep still. “G-g-go on with the f-f-fighting.”

“Don’t be so impatient,” Bart admonished, placing a salt-cellar near the fold that marked the road. “This is where Lafayette and Green

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were stationed, and 'way back here by this bowl was Washington with the main army."

He stopped, regarding his diagram critically and with a most serious air.

"Now, right in here the road narrowed down between wide swamps, one on each side, which we'll mark with this saucer and the fruit-dish, and just where I put this knife there was a bridge. Don't forget that, because it's important. And on this spot where the spoon is, was a big tree, and that's important too, as you'll see later on.

"Well, early in the morning we had orders to attack, and off we went crossing the bridge between the saucer and the fruit-dish, as gay as could be, all of us anxious to fight the redcoats, though it was hot even before the sun was well up. We sighted them, and we are just about to attack, when along comes a message from Lee to withdraw. Wayne was in a rage, but he could n't do anything else; so back we went without a blow. Then along comes another order to make a feint and we go off again, only to be withdrawn once more, till we did n't know what was happening and the men thought some one

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was going crazy—and I tell you, General Wayne was near crazy,—but that was because Lee would n't let him fight."

"Why did n't he fight, anyhow?" I demanded.

"Oh, he could n't, you know," Bart explained. "Lee was in command of the whole force and Wayne had to do as he was ordered, whether he liked it or not."

"I would have f-f-fighted!" declared Peggy positively.

"Pretty soon we had to fight," her brother went on, "for the first thing we knew the British came running across the knife there—I mean the bridge—and were attacking us instead of our attacking them,—and that's a very different matter, let me tell you! The redcoats came with a rush, and our fellows, not knowing what to do and bewildered by such contrary orders, were taken by surprise and—and they ran. Yes, they ran, though I hate to say it. I was with father, who with Stewart and Ramsey were trying to rally them. Down the fold we went and came up with Lee, who was sitting his horse like a spectator, doing nothing, and I thought it was all up with us, when along came a man on horseback

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riding like the wind. Oh, you should have seen him and heard the shouts that went up when we knew that it was his Excellency, General Washington! He is a man!" exclaimed Bart, almost at the top of his voice, and Peggy and I gave a little cheer as if we had been there ourselves.

"What 's the meaning of this?" cried Washington, as he reined up beside Lee," Bart continued. "And Lee mumbled something in answer. Then the General just told him what he thought of him. 'You 're a poltroon, sir!' he shouted, and more of the same sort of talk, while Lee got red in the face but could n't stand that storm. Oh, the General was fine and angry, and had I been in Lee's place I should have died of shame. As it was he went off to the rear, and Washington took command of us. It was mighty different then. The redcoats were running across that knife, bent on mischief and meaning to drive us back to the bowl, but we rallied in the face of them and the General, with his sword lifted high above his head and greatly exposing himself, led us at them, and before we knew it they were being driven back between the saucer and the fruit-

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dish and then across the knife into the sauce-boat where Knyphausen was.

"I tell you, Bee!" cried Bart, firing up at the thought, "it was almost worth while to retreat in order to see what one man could do! There was swamp on each side of the road and eight thousand British were chasing us, but Washington re-formed two of our regiments under fire, and that gave time to plant the troops he had brought up with him on good ground. But it was a close thing, so close that Alexander Hamilton said his only thought was to die on the spot, and even Laurens hoped for no more than an orderly retreat. But Washington—well, for all his calm ways he is as mad as Wayne himself when it comes to fighting, and when he leads, the men will follow, caring naught what happens to them!"

Bart stopped, out of breath.

"And you b-b-beat them, B-b-bart?" asked Peggy excitedly.

"Aye, we beat them," Bart continued. "They made a stand at the sauce-boat, but only for a little while; and still we drove them on. All day we fought, and when at last night came, they

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were ready to cry quits. 'T was only the darkness that saved Clinton's whole army, for we found them gone the next morning. If Lee had n't played the traitor they would never have reached the coffee-cup, I mean Sandy Hook, of course. Oh, it was splendid—but very hot."

"B-b-but B-bart," Peggy broke in, after a moment's pause, "you have n't told us about the spoon that 's a t-t-tree."

"Hush," murmured Bart warningly. "That 's where I found my Hessian," and he looked about the room to see if any one were within hearing.

"Your Hessian?" I echoed, not knowing what he meant.

"It 's a secret," he answered. "Let 's go out somewhere under the trees where we 'll be alone. Listen!"

He leaned across the table and we three put our heads together.

"I know where there 's a pirate's treasure," he whispered.

CHAPTER II

PIRATE GOLD

BART was so mysterious that without another word we all three went out of doors on tiptoe as if we feared to make a noise. We scampered through the orchard near the house and into the woods bordering it and were soon hidden among the trees, certain that no one would hear our secrets there.

"This will do," said Bart, seating himself at the foot of a huge chestnut, and Peggy and I dropped down beside him.

"Hurry and t-t-tell us, B-bart," cried his sister, impatiently; "I l-l-love m-m-mysteries."

"This is no joke," replied Bart, very seriously, "and I misdoubt I have made a mistake in letting you know anything about it. It popped out without my thinking."

"Oh, you need n't worry about Peggy, Bart," I hastened to put in. "She can be as secret as any one. She's proved that."

PIRATE GOLD

"B-b-besides you c-c-could n't keep it from me, a-a-anyway," said Miss Peggy, with a toss of her head, "I *always* know."

"Remember, then, not a word of this to a soul," insisted Bart, and it was plain from his manner that, whatever he had to tell us, he attached much importance to it. "I don't want any one else to get hold of it, least of all Polly and Betty."

"You need have no f-f-fear," answered Peggy, turning up her snip of a nose disdainfully; "they're much too m-m-moderate for my t-t-taste."

At which Bart and I burst out into peals of laughter.

"Know you a stauncher patriot, Bart?" I asked, hugging Peggy, for she was ever a little hurt when laughed at. "On with your tale, for you must e'en trust her."

"To begin with," Bart said, "we found that Clinton had gone off leaving behind his dead and wounded for us to care for, and I was sent out with some others to look for the injured. Now, along in the afternoon, as I was returning to headquarters, I was passing that tree that

BEATRICE OF DENEWOOD

I marked by a spoon on the table, when I heard a great groan. At first I saw nothing, but, upon going around the trunk, I found a Hessian soldier propped up against it. He had a bullet in his leg and he thought he was going to die, right then and there. When he saw me he began to chatter in broken English begging me not to scalp him."

"What nonsense," I cried; "as if we were Indians!"

"Oh, he believed it," Bart explained. "He had been told tales of torture and I know not what else about us, to keep him and his countrymen from deserting. The British had to do something; for you know the Hessians have been offered grants of land if they desert, and scores of them have been coming in with their pots and kettles and wives, all ready to set up housekeeping. 'T was no easy matter to get word to them until Doctor Franklin hit upon the plan of having the offer printed in German and stowed in packages of strong tobacco such as soldiers smoke.—At any rate Hans Kalbfleisch, my wounded Hessian, was dreadfully frightened;

PIRATE GOLD

but I got him into camp and the surgeons cut off his leg, so that he was as well as ever."

"That 's n-no m-m-mystery," Peg broke in disgustedly, as Bart paused for breath.

"Nay, now, do not be so impatient," retorted Bart. "I 'm coming to that in good time. When Hans was a little recovered from his hurt and found that he was not to be massacred, he was monstrous grateful to me, and now and then, when I had nothing else to do, I would stop and talk to him; for he was a decent sort of chap, though he was a Hessian. Well, one day when we were alone he asked me in his funny, broken English, if I knew old Schmuck, the magus in Philadelphia. You 've heard of old Schmuck, have n't you, Bee?"

"Never," I answered, "and I have n't the faintest idea what a magus is."

"Well, a magus," Bart explained, "is a sort of diviner. A fellow who finds things that are hidden under the ground, like treasure; but mostly they search for springs of water."

"How do they do it?" I asked, much puzzled.

"With a hazel wand, usually," Bart answered,

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"though some use a peach branch. Oh, 't is true they can tell, Bee," he insisted, no doubt seeing my look of incredulity; "and the farmers have a magus pick out the spot when they want to dig a well. He takes the hazel twig between the palms of his hands and walks slowly over the land till it bends down to the ground, and *that* is the spot to dig, whether it be for treasure or only for water."

"'T is very funny," I said. "But go on with your Hessian; he's interesting."

"I told him I had heard of old Schmuck," Bart continued, "and expected something more about him, but he turned the conversation to the country around Philadelphia and asked me, did I know of Wissahickon Creek. I told him I did, and he said he had a friend who had camped there for a while and that he himself had hoped to visit it, but that now he feared he would never see the place. It was plain that Hans had something on his mind which he wanted, and yet did n't want, to tell me. But at length, after he was convinced that it was useless to think of going there himself, he took me into his confidence."

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"N-n-now, it is c-c-oming," whispered Peggy, wriggling with expectation.

"Mind you," Bart continued, "this did n't happen all in a minute. It was, maybe, a day or two later that, after looking about to see that no one was within hearing, he drew me close to him and whispered:

" 'I have dreamed a dream three times, and to dream three times is sure.'

" 'What have you dreamed?' I asked him, though I did n't feel much interested.

" 'T is a dream of hidden gold and silver and much other wealth,' he answered, his eyes gleaming covetously as he talked and his excitement growing, so that I understood less than half of what he said."

Bart paused a moment looking about to see that no one could overhear.

"Why did the Hessian tell you about a dream?" I asked, with increasing interest.

"Now you are just as impatient as Peg," laughed Bart, "but to tell the truth, Bee, that's the very question I asked Hans. And then out came the whole of his plan. He wanted me to hunt for the treasure he had seen in his sleep."

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"But—but—" I began.

"Hold on," Bart interrupted, "let me tell you just how it was. At first I laughed at what he called his dream, but he was so earnest, that finally I really became convinced that in some way he knew of a hidden treasure, and I consented to make a search for it.

" 'T is hid,' he told me, 'halfway between the tree blazed with the skull, where 't was buried by the crooked man with one eye.' "

"Oh-o-o—" came in a long drawl from Peg, "the c-c-crooked man with one e-eye! It s-s-sounds awful!"

"But halfway between the tree and what?" I asked, noting that the description was not complete.

"That was what I wanted to know," Bart went on, "and Hans said old Schmuck the magus could find the spot, when I told him it was on the right bank of the Wissahickon, north of the Rittenhouse Mill Road, and buried between the blazed tree with the crooked man with one eye."

"*With* the crooked man?" I exclaimed, aghast, "you said 'by' before."

"To tell the truth," replied Bart, "I don't know

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exactly whether it was 'by,' or 'with,' because his English was so queer. It might be 'with' you know. Pirates always killed a man and buried him with their treasure so that his shpook could guard it. 'T is well known that Kidd and Blackbeard came up our rivers with their gold, and like as not Hans' treasure is some such loot."

"Nay, Bart, 't is a silly story," I said with a laugh; "your Hessian was quizzing you."

"Aye, Bee, that was my very thought," agreed Bart earnestly, by no means abashed at my doubt. "But, when I laughed and told Hans I would have none of his dreams, he was fair beside himself and begged that I at least tell Schmuck. He protested that he wanted me to share the gold out of gratitude for my having saved him, and a lot more such talk, which I had no great faith in, for the end was always the same. 'Tell Schmuck. Tell the magus,' was his plea, until I grew sure that there was a hidden treasure. 'T is plain Hans would never have told me a word of it had he been fit to go himself; but, seeing no other way, he was forced to take some one into his confidence—and now I mean to find it."

"And what is he to get out of it if you do

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find anything?" I asked, becoming as convinced as Bart, that there was something more in this tale than appeared on the surface.

"Oh, he wanted half, of course," Bart said easily; "but I told him flat that I would not take all the risk and all the trouble for so small a share. 'Tis not as if I wanted it for myself. He grumbled mightily, but finally consented to leave the matter to me so long as I would tell the magus as quickly as possible."

"I can see no such need of haste if 't was a dream he dreamed," I suggested.

"He insisted it was a dream to the very last," Bart replied; "but he gave me a sly wink and said that others might dream too, and that there was no time to lose. I don't believe all he told me, but I'm sure he knows of a hidden treasure. He hints that it is a pirate's hoard, and I mean to have a look for it. Pirate gold belongs to him who finds it, and I have no mind to see it in the hands of some Tory or moderate when the cause stands in need of money."

"Did Hans say that he had known the magus?" I questioned.

"No, he protested that he had never seen him,"

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Bart explained, "and I think he was telling the truth, though of course I can't be sure."

"What do you mean to do?" I inquired.

"To go with old Schmuck to seek the treasure, taking some one with me to help guard and carry it here, where we can find a place to stow it in safety until I see a way to transport it to his Excellency," Bart answered succinctly.

"Who will you get to go with you?" I asked. "John or Allan McLane will be best."

At this I fancied Bart looked a little embarrassed, but when he spoke it was quite frankly.

"Nay, Bee, I'll be honest with you," he said. "If Jack or Captain McLane go, they are my superior officers and I get no credit out of the affair. General Washington needs money even more than he needs men and I am hot for my commission; so, if I pull this off for myself, I'll get it, you'll see, even despite my lack of years."

"Then whom can you ask to help you?" I demanded, puzzled, and Bart looked straight in my eyes and said:

"You, Bee!"

"T-t-to be s-s-sure," agreed Peggy, in the most matter-of-fact way, "and I'll h-h-help too."

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"No, no," said Bart impatiently, "don't get that into your head. You could n't be of any use."

"I c-c-could s-s-so." Peggy was very indignant. "I c-c-could k-k-keep the g-g-ghostses amused."

Whereat we had to laugh, to the lady's great disgust.

"But will you go, Bee?" Bart was all eagerness and not to be diverted. "You 'd like to do something for the cause, would n't you?"

"What are your plans?" I asked cautiously.

"Well, I shall see Schmuck first," Bart began, but I interrupted:

"Can't you get along without this Schmuck?"

"No, I cannot," answered Bart. "If I could I would, willingly enough; but 't is impossible for me to dig up the ground for a mile, it may be, around the blazed tree. The treasure may lie a yard away or it may not be within a hundred. That 's what the magus must determine, and 't is on that account I am forced to take him along."

"But you need n't tell him all you know," I insisted, full of a vague distrust. "Only enough to get him interested without saying just where the spot is."

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"Exactly," agreed Bart. "All I 'll say is that the treasure is on the right bank of the Wisahickon and that he must find the place, though my Hessian told me to tell him about the blazed tree and the crooked man."

"And then what?" I asked.

"Then we 'll agree upon a night—!"

"Night!" I exclaimed. "Must we go at night?"

"Why, of course, Bee," he replied, surprised at my question. "Whoever heard of hunting treasure in the daytime?"

"To be sure, that 's true," I answered, admitting the force of this argument; "but Mrs. Mummer would never let me go."

"There 's my m-m-mouse's h-h-hole," suggested Peg crossly; "You can g-g-go by that if you w-w-want to."

"What 's that?" Bart was curious.

"'T is a queer passageway she found down through the nursery chimney and out by the spring-house," I explained.

"Allan McLane w-w-went out by it o-o-once and he was s-s-so big that he n-n-nearly s-s-stuck," Peg remarked, good-humored once

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more, her little tempers never enduring for long.

"So you can go, Bee, if you only will," Bart pleaded.

"But of what use can I be to you?" I asked, helplessly.

"You can help with the gold," he replied, "and watch and see that old Schmuck does n't bash me over the head when my back is turned. You could carry a pistol, could n't you? It need not be loaded. He would only need to see it."

"Aye, I could carry a pistol," I said a little doubtfully, "but 't would be better to take one of the black boys along."

"Nay, they would be frightened out of their wits," Bart protested.

"Not Charley," I insisted. "Moreover, he is strong and could help with the digging. Please take Charley," I ended pleadingly.

"Will you go if I do?" he questioned eagerly, and I nodded in agreement.

And so, swept off my feet by my wish to help Bart, by my desire to aid the cause, and not a little influenced, if it must be confessed, by the thought of the adventure itself, I found myself committed to the expedition. It is passing

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strange how matters turn out, and a wiser head than mine could not have foreseen how much depended on my answer to his pleading, but had I refused to go I might have been spared many, many weeks of anxiety,

CHAPTER III

A MYSTERIOUS MAGUS

A WEEK passed before Bart's plan for the treasure-hunt was matured, and in the meantime Brother John was detailed for special duty under General Arnold in Philadelphia. Although I was disappointed, because I had hoped he had come home for good, it was a comfort to know that he would be stationed so near to us and in no danger. His own company under Captain McLane were with Washington and had John been there I should have been constantly anxious, for the men of that troop were ever on the outlook for danger, waiting not for it to come to them but rather going forth to find it with a right good will.

Brother John and I had long talks about Dene-wood and how we were to manage, for, although under ordinary circumstances there was more than enough money and John was a rich man, owning many ships, trade was at a standstill and

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what hard money he could find was given to Washington and the cause which came before all in his heart. So we were forced to plan and to contrive in many ways to feed the household and the slaves on the place; and while, of course, Mrs. Mummer was first in these matters, certain responsibilities were given to me and, in John's absence, mine was the final word though I took no advantage of that but looked to Mrs. Mummer to guide me in all things.

Therefore I had, in a measure, lost sight of Bart's treasure-hunt and one morning, when he tapped me on the shoulder and whispered, "'T is to-night," I did not take his meaning.

"I've arranged it all with old Schmuck, the magus," he added, and then I knew what he was talking about.

"What did he say?" I asked eagerly.

"He was n't much for it at first," Bart replied; "said he was engaged; but he soon came round. All he wanted was a larger fee."

"You didn't tell him of the blazed tree?" I questioned.

"Nay, not a word," Bart answered. "We leave the house at eleven o'clock. That will give

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us time to reach the creek before midnight; I will have the horses ready in the lane back of the spring house."

I thought a good deal of our adventure throughout the rest of the day and questioned more than once whether it had been wise for me to agree to Bart's schemes, but I could not have played the informer and gone to Brother John with it and I knew Bart well enough to be sure he would go alone, as he had said he might do, unless I accompanied him. In this way I salved my conscience and looked forward eagerly to the quest.

Since the British had left Philadelphia and we had no one quartered upon us, we had rearranged our sleeping quarters and I was back in my own chamber alone, while little Peg slept in a small room beside mine. We had n't breathed a word to her of our plans and I was somewhat worried for fear she would insist, as she often did, on sharing my bed. But this night she brought a kitten up with her from the kitchens and said naught of sleeping with me.

"Why have you brought the kitten?" I asked her as she prepared for bed.

"To w-w-watch the m-m-mouse's h-h-hole,"

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she answered, readily. "Mrs. M-m-mummer says 't is good to begin training them y-y-young," she went on, gravely, "and b-b-besides I g-grow tired of d-d-doing all the w-w-work myself."

"Go to bed, goosie," I said; "some day you will see a mouse in that hole of yours and you 'll be frightened out of your wits."

"Not if it's a m-m-mouse with two l-l-legs," she laughed back at me, and a few minutes later she was in bed and I had blown out the candle.

In my own room I saw to it that my preparations for the adventure were complete. I put out riding boots and hat, a cloak that came well down below my knees, and a pistol which Bart had given me. Then I tied up my hair in a queue and, as I looked at myself in the mirror, I thought it not unlikely that I might be mistaken for Bart's brother.

But when these arrangements were completed there was still a good two hours of waiting and I dared not lie down for fear of dropping off to sleep and so missing my engagement. I had not thought to bring a novel with me, so I had recourse to my little book of maxims in which had been set down all my doings and sayings since

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I was a small maid of six years. This book was one of my most cherished possessions and a close link between me and my old home in England. The covers were of silk, embroidered by dear old Granny herself, and many of the writings put down in it were in her neat hand.

As I turned the pages idly, I could n't help wondering how she liked living with her daughter, Madam Van der Helst, in Amsterdam, a town which she despised. Poor old Granny! I loved her truly and wished she were in America with me, but she would have been quite as out of place with the "Barbarians," as she styled those who dwell in the colonies, as in Amsterdam. Nay, Granny could only be happy when she was a *grand dame* again, sitting with other old ladies at the routs and drums in London, gossiping of the gay days at court in the time of the late King.

But, though Granny loved her dish of gossip as well as another, she loved her orphaned grandchildren more, and my brothers, Hal and Horrie, had shared with me all the luxuries her small means could afford so long as we lived in the old Dower House together. 'Twas not her fault

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that we were forced to leave the only home we had known and seek shelter among strangers till Horrie should come into his inheritance upon the death of our cousin, Sir Horace Travers of Frobisham in Kent. 'T was not her fault that Mr. Van der Helst, her son-in-law, insisted that I be sent to the Americas, though it did seem as if my fate was to be a sad one. But oh! how differently it had turned out from my expectations, and how truly welcome Cousin John had made me! I indeed had found my fortune across great waters as a gypsy woman had foretold when I was but a babe and—and—

I came to my senses with a guilty start, for I had been napping; and, jumping to my feet, I turned to the clock, fearing I had missed my meeting with Bart at eleven; but 't was only ten. I tiptoed to Peg's room and peeped in through the door. There she was, her black head showing sharply against the white pillow and the kitten fast asleep at the foot of the bed. I watched her a moment and returned to my chair with a sigh of envy.

I closed my book of maxims with a snap. Clearly this thinking back over the past was no

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good way to keep awake. I must find another means to prop my eyes open.

I picked up a copy of the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* and glanced at the news it contained.

"A party of the American Light Horse pursued them" (the British), "and took a great number of prisoners, some of whom were refugees. Soon after the evacuation Major General Arnold took possession of Philadelphia with Colonel Jackson's Massachusetts regiment."

A few weeks before that item had been most exciting because Brother John was with the Light Horse, but now it was stale news, though I clipped it out and have kept it because it was about John.

Then, for want of better employment, I started to read the advertisements.

"John Fisher, brush-maker near the gaol in Lancaster, has powder, shot and raisins for sale."

"'T would be a heavy cake if he should mistake and sell shot for raisins," I said to myself, smiling at such a funny combination of commodities. Then I read: "Francis Gurney and Company offer green and bohea teas, shalloons, lantern-horns, ruffled shirts and snuff and tobacco in hogsheads."

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Shalloons and ruffled shirts in hogsheads seemed monstrous comical things and I laughed aloud, but 't was a sleepy laugh and had I been broader awake I think I should not have been so amused.

A little way down the page I found another advertisement that interested me, which read as follows:

“Ran away, on the night of August third last, from the subscriber, living in Coombes’s alley, a servant lad named Mark Powell, about fourteen years of age, of American birth who has between four and five years to serve. Had on when last seen a whole suit of homespun, yarn stockings, and heeled, leathern shoes with large brass buckles. He is marked by a great scar over his left eye, is very active, can run almost as fast as a horse and is a good hand with narrow or broad axe, whipsaw and most carpenter tools. Whosoever takes him up and secures him in the Philadelphia jail shall have TWO POUNDS reward and reasonable charges. Jonathan Willis.

 His wrist is so large that he cannot be secured with common handcuffs.”

I know not quite why it was so but I felt a great sympathy, not for Mr. Jonathan Willis who had lost a bond servant, but for the runaway boy, who was just about my age. Surely his lot

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must have been a hard one for him to have risked a public whipping at the Town Hall if he was captured. While the British and Hessians were about, many slaves and servants had run away from fright, who were glad enough to return to good homes when their fears were allayed. But this boy evidently meant to stay away, and I doubted not he had been badly treated. Then, too, I was impressed by the item saying that he could slip his hands out of handcuffs; also, that he could run nearly as fast as a horse seemed to me wonderful, if it were true. Altogether I thought no little of this poor boy, Mark Powell, and read the advertisement through, several times.

But at last the hands of the clock showed that the moment for meeting Bart had arrived and all other thoughts flew out of my head as I prepared to go down to him.

Now that the hour had come I had misgivings, but it was too late to back out; my fingers trembled from excitement as I drew on my boots, threw the long cape over my shoulder and adjusted my hat. I took a last look at myself and, putting out the light, tiptoed to the door.

The house was as still as death; I moved along

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the hall toward the nursery and in another moment I was groping in the fireplace for the entrance to the secret passage that little Peg called the "Mouse's-hole." I found it without trouble, for I had gone that way before, and I breathed easier as I took my first step down.

But it was exceeding dark and I wished I had had the forethought to fetch a lanthorn with me. However, it was out of the question to go back and I groped my way as well as I could in the blackness that was but ill relieved by the faint gray light that showed through the pigskins covering the chinks in the masonry.

At the bottom, the passage turned toward the spring-house and I was startled by the sound of splashing water. I halted, my heart doubling its beat, but there was no further sound and, thinking I had been mistaken, I went on until at length I was at the end of the passage beside the spring-house door.

As I stepped out I met Bart.

"Is it you, Bee?" he asked in a whisper, which though low-toned showed his excitement.

"Who else could it be?" I questioned back, with a little shiver of nervousness.

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"It could be no one else, I suppose," he answered, "but I just came up, and before I reached here I fancied I saw something move out of the house and was afraid I'd missed you. Come along. Charley is with the horses, and we must not delay or we shall be too late."

In the darkness we stumbled sadly as we picked our way toward the road.

"We'll need a light, Bart," I said; "I should have thought of it."

"Charley has one and also a spade," he answered. "You can trust me to be prepared, no matter what may come," and though I could n't see him, I was sure he had thrown back his head confidently, which was a trick he had acquired since he had become a soldier.

He led me by a short cut through the orchard and so out into the road a few hundred yards from the house, and here we came upon the horses.

"Hurry now," said Bart, stepping up to set me upon my beast; "we have n't any time to lose," and he reached out his hand.

"Nay, I need no help," I answered, and then, to our surprise and consternation, a little figure in a dark frock sidled up beside us.

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"You may h-h-help me, an it p-p-please you," said Peggy, for it was she, looking like a gnome in the darkness, with her peaked hood and brown cloak.

For a moment neither Bart nor I could say a word, so chagrined were we; but at last he found his tongue.

"What 's the meaning of this?" he burst out angrily; "you have no business here, and now you 've spoiled it all."

"How could you, Peggy?" I almost sobbed with vexation; "you should n't have come."

"Nay," she retorted, "I was in the secret too, and I meant to come, all the time; only I did n't say so, knowing it might delay you."

"But how did you know?" demanded Bart. "Did you tell her, Bee?"

"Not a word," I answered. "I thought she was sound asleep."

"I was n't," she chuckled, "but you were o-once, 'c-c-cause I p-peeped in. You had y-y-your eyes s-s-shut. I thought I s-s-should have to w-w-wake you."

"What are we to do with her?" Bart asked helplessly.

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"T-t-to t-t-take me w-with you," said Peg. "A w-w-wilful w-w-woman w-w-will have her w-w-way, as M-m-mummer says."

"You can't ride bareback," I snapped, a little crossly, for there might be danger to be met and I liked it not that Peggy should run risks.

"There 'll be a p-p-pillion on one of the s-s-saddles," she answered calmly. "I t-t-told C-c-charley to p-p-put one on, and he s-s-said he w-w-would, though he looked q-q-queer about it."

"Tha's right, Marse Bart," said Charley with the suspicion of a snicker.

I was inclined to laugh, but Bart was angry and perplexed; for we had scant time to argue if we were to meet the magus at the appointed hour.

"You must go back at once," he ordered, but Peg shook her head with equal positiveness.

"Please, Peg," I began, but she cut me short.

"'T is no use to s-s-say p-p-please, B-b-bee, so let's be going or we shall be late."

It was plain that if we were to go at all she must make one of the party. Though I called her a naughty child and Bart threatened her with all

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sorts of violence, she never budged, and all the while the minutes were flying.

"Then I suppose you must go," he flung out at last. "A wilful woman must e'en have her way, so up with you; but I like it not, and if you come to harm you have none to blame but yourself."

A moment later we were off, Bart leading the way with the lanthorn, little Peg mounted on the pillion behind me, while Charley, carrying the spade, brought up the rear.

"We meet the magus at the Rittenhouse Mill Road," said Bart, still angry, and for a while we rode on in silence, though the small imp of a maid at my back chuckled and fidgeted with excitement.

It was a black and cloudy night, the moon we had counted upon being overcast; but when our eyes had grown accustomed to the darkness we could see well enough and the horses seemed to have no difficulty in picking their way.

As we neared the Rittenhouse Mill Road I for one had a fast beating heart, for the real beginning of our adventures was at hand.

We saw the magus first a-top of the rise, a dark,

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weird figure silhouetted against the sky, sitting motionless upon a small mule which our horses liked not at all to go in company with.

He was dressed entirely in a tight-fitting suit of black satin, which served to enhance the thinness of him, and on his head he wore a wide, flapping hat, also black, but relieved by one blood-red plume, which, standing straight up seemed to add a foot to his already extravagant height. He was indeed monstrous tall, though no thicker than a sapling, and his legs hung down on each side of his steed till I thought they must touch the ground.

He greeted us civilly enough but with many long and uncouth words and I was surprised when he made it plain that he thought me a boy. At first he did n't see Peggy, but when at last he discovered her, he remarked that he had not counted upon a female child being one of the party and he misdoubted how the spirits would like it.

This disconcerted Peggy not at all.

"'T is not likely I will fright them," she answered for herself, for she feared the magus no more than she feared anything else on earth, after

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which Schmuck said naught further on the subject.

We turned our horses toward the Wissahickon creek and, as we rode, it was evident from the very beginning that old Schmuck was bent upon frightening us.

Such tales of ghosts and flibberty-gibbets as he related were enough to chill the blood; and one in particular, of a spectral coach driven through the streets of Philadelphia by a fiendish spirit, was most uncanny; but whether he overdrew his tales or whether we were too well instructed to be befooled, I know not; 't is certain that we maids were not unduly terrified, though I was soon to learn that one of our party had been affected.

"Touching the driver of that ghostly coach," said Bart coolly, "his beasts must have been spirits too, seeing that he could guide them. Faith, I knew not before that horses had souls!"

"If you come in such a scoffing mood, young master," answered the magus petulantly, "you are little like to be rewarded by the spirits you will not trust."

"'T is not the ghosts I so much depend on as good Hans Kalbfleisch," said Bart carelessly.

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"Hans Kalbfleisch!" exclaimed the magus, the tone of his voice showing extreme astonishment, while at the same time he spurred his beast so that it jumped about the road disturbing our cavalcade greatly. 'T was some time before we could bring our horses down to order again, and then Bart questioned the man pointedly.

"You repeated 'Hans Kalbfleisch' as if the name was not unfamiliar to you. Tell me, do you know him?"

"I said the name?" retorted the magus, and his manner was almost rough. "Nay, you must have misunderstood. I am but a poor horseman and the shying of my animal nigh unseated me."

"Yet I, too, heard you say the name," I put in.

"Then it must have been that I repeated it, because it struck my ear with a certain quaintness," the magus answered; "but come, we must hurry on," and as an example to us he spurred his little donkey forward.

From the moment Bart unwittingly mentioned the name of Hans Kalbfleisch the manner of the magus underwent a complete change. Heretofore he had acted as one who played a rôle, with his stories of ghosts and spirits intended to fright

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the ignorant, intent only upon earning his fees and maintaining his reputation as a wizard. Now, however, he became eager and rather silent, answering shortly what questions were put to him. I noted that he muttered to himself yet seemed to be making an effort to control some strong excitement he felt. This, more than anything else, made me uneasy.

Thus for a time there was silence, and about a half-mile further on we stopped and dismounted. We took the horses along a narrow path to a small clearing where we tethered them and were about to proceed, when a queer rattling noise attracted my attention. I turned, to see Charley trembling beside me.

"Please, Miss Bee," he mumbled between his chattering teeth, "you all don't want these here horses stayin' alone in the dark like this, does you?"

It was plain that our black boy was in abject fear and ready to run off at any moment if we insisted upon his accompanying us, so I called to Bart, who was a little ahead with the magus, and he came back to where I stood.

I explained the situation, whereupon he scolded

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Charley roundly in an undertone, for we had no wish to inform the magus that his stories had been taken seriously by one of our party.

Bart pondered the matter for a moment.

"We 'll have to do our own digging, Bee," he whispered, then, raising his voice, "Charley, you stay here with the horses, but come at once, when I call. We 'll be within hail."

"Yes, sir," answered the boy, immensely relieved, and we left him forthwith.

I had felt a little uneasy at Schmuck's manner and when we came up with him I was far from reassured.

"Come! Lead on!" he ordered gruffly. "Think you I can wait all night while you pick your way so daintily? Come on; come on!"

"Nay, there 's no hurry," I said. "Light the lanthorn, Bart, and we 'll look to the priming of our pistols."

I spoke in as firm a voice as I could muster, but I was far from feeling courageous, nor was I reassured when the light which Bart kindled showed me the face of the magus, for he was an evil-looking man, and in that dim glow his eyes glittered ominously and had a look of avarice as if some-

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thing for which he had long sought was about to come within his grasp.

He scowled at the sight of the pistols, but immediately his manner changed again and he became once more the servile, cringing charlatan we had first known.

"Which way, young master?" he asked, and his tones were very humble.

"Lead on, Bart," I said. "I'll follow Schmuck," and I balanced the pistol in my hand carelessly,

CHAPTER IV

I DIG FOR TREASURE

AS we picked our way in single file through the dark woods bordering the stream the magus tried again to terrify us with tales of ghosts and such-like supernatural creatures. How they impressed Bart I could not tell, but I found myself glancing about nervously and beginning to be afraid of I knew not what.

On the road, with a sturdy horse under me, this talk of evil spirits had scarce any effect, but in the damp forest with croaking frogs and the plaintive call of a whippoorwill to accent the silence I confess I was ill at ease. Before me the magus strode along, the blood-red plume touching the lower branches of the trees, a queer, gaunt figure in the swaying light of the lanthorn.

Little Peg was the least concerned of any of us, I think. She was close beside me and at each stumble over root or stone she would chuckle or

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give vent to some stuttering utterance that on another occasion would have made us all laugh, but I never felt less like laughing. I wished with all my heart that we had never come upon this quest and, most of all, that Peg was safe in bed. But such wishes were vain. I picked my way behind old Schmuck, holding my pistol in a trembling hand and fearful that I might be called upon to use it.

Presently Bart turned sharply to the right and after a few paces stopped.

"'T is here," he said, in an undertone, as we all drew up beside him; "take your wand, magus, and begin the search."

Schmuck drew forth a long, lithe wand which seemed to wave of itself in the uncertain light of the lanthorn. His excitement was apparent, though he strove to preserve his character of seer or diviner. But, although I was near beside myself with anxiety and eagerness to have done with the matter, I could not help seeing the intentness with which the man peered about him in the darkness as if he were in search of something.

Evidently he found it not, for after a moment

BEATRICE OF DENEWOOD

he asked Bart to let him have the lantern.

"Nay, your wand needs no light nor your spirits neither," answered Bart. "I'll keep the lantern."

"But where shall I begin?" whined the magus, taking on again his most humble mien. "'T is needful that I find a suitable place. You have n't told me all you know, young master," he ended.

"If I knew the exact spot," answered Bart, "there would be small use in taking a magus, at some expense."

It was plain that Schmuck was perplexed, for he hesitated a moment as if undecided how to proceed.

"How near to the white stone is the place?" he demanded so suddenly that I was taken by surprise.

"The white stone?" cried Bart suspiciously. "What know you of a white stone?"

"Naught, naught," answered the magus evasively; "I saw such in a vision, mayhap."

"Humph! another dream," muttered Bart to himself, and I was sure that he realized, as I did, that old Schmuck knew more of the matter than he was willing to divulge. To me, indeed, it

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seemed that each had some special knowledge that he neither dared nor cared to trust to the other, so that there was like to be a deadlock.

It was now Bart's turn to hesitate but after a moment he evidently reached a decision.

"Come on," he ordered, and he led us to a spot a few paces nearer the creek where he took his stand with his back against a big tree.

"'T is hereabouts. Now let us see what good your magic is."

With a curious, sidelong glance at us, the magus set his peeled wand between the palms of his hands. The clouds had parted a little and a pale light seemed to come from both the water and the sky so that the diviner in his black suit was plainly visible.

Slowly he began to move across the open space, then back and forth in circles, seeming to be led by the rod he carried in front of him, so slight and willowy was his form. At length he stopped.

"There is naught here," he said despondently, but even as he spoke the clouds parted still further and a pale trickle of light spilled down upon a great white stone that had previously been in shadow.

BEATRICE OF DENEWOOD

"The white stone!" we all gasped together, and for a full minute we stood staring at it in silence.

Bart was the first to recover himself.

"Try it over this way," he cried, leaping away from the tree against which he had been standing and running toward the stone. But for an instant a flash from the lanthorn had lighted up the trunk of the tree, and there, rudely carved in the bark, I caught a glimpse of a skull and crossbones. It was the blazed tree of which Hans Kalbfleisch had spoken and I knew we must be near the pirates' hoard.

I followed Bart, and so did the magus, and as he ran I saw the wand in his hand drawn downward to the earth till it bent like a fishing-rod when one has hooked too heavy a fish.

"'T is here," he gasped, like one in heavy pain.

"'T is here. I feel it."

"Then let's begin to dig," said Bart, quite valiantly, so I thought, for his voice sounded indifferent enough and he made a movement toward the spade.

"Not yet," cried the magus, with a great gesture of horror. "Wouldst have the spirits that guard the spot destroy us?"



Slowly he began to move across the open space

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"Nay," answered Bart, a little anxiously, "'t is to guard against those gentry I brought you along."

"Then come nigh while I draw the magic circle," the magus commanded.

For a moment Bart hesitated, then stepped toward him.

"Come," he said to me, "we 'll get out of reach of the spirits," and he tried to laugh as if he cared not, but made a failure of his attempt.

"I 'll s-s-stay h-h-here," said little Peg, seating herself on a boulder. "I think it 's s-s-s-safer."

I confess I should have liked to remain with Peggy, but that would have been to desert Bart, so I went forward with him.

When we had taken our places Schmuck leaned down as if he meant to draw the magic circle of which he had spoken; but, ere he began, he straightened up again.

"Lay aside all cold metal, for if you have aught of that upon your persons we are lost," he said with solemn shake of his head.

"I have naught but a lucky sixpence about my throat," I hastened to tell him; for his tone was most ominous.

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"Nay, good silver will not matter. 'T is cold iron that is fatal," he answered in a hard voice. And then I saw that he meant our pistols and I became doubly suspicious.

"Come," I said to Bart, and he walked with me to where little Peg was seated.

"'T is the pistols," I murmured, so that none save he could hear me.

"Aye, I guessed that," he returned, "but I mean we shall keep them all the same."

"How will you manage it?" I asked.

"Do as I do," he whispered, "but first hide the pistol under your cape."

When we reached Peg, Bart stooped as if to lay his pistol down.

"We'll put them here on the ground," he said aloud, so that the magus could n't fail to hear him, and then as I bent to do the same, he whispered in my ear; "find a billet of wood about the size of a pistol if you can."

I searched the ground with my hand and found a dead branch of about the right length.

"I have it," I answered.

"Good," muttered Bart, under his breath. Then aloud he went on. "No, we had better lay

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them on the rock. The grass is damp," and with that we rose and Bart placed a piece of wood beside Peg. I did the same with my stick and, at a little distance, in that dim light, they looked enough like pistols and I thought Bart's trick was rather clever.

Back we walked to the magus who, as soon as we were near him, began again to make his circle.

He chanted some strange words and we watched him slowly move his wand in a wide ring about us. As he neared the end he stopped his chant and spoke again to us.

"Spirits dire and dread are all around. We stand above a pirate treasure. In the grave with the gold lies the body of its guardian. Knew you that?" he demanded suddenly.

"Aye, I've heard the like before," answered Bart, showing no sign of fear.

"The treasure is here," the magus went on, "but the evil spirit that watches over it is strong. Utter no word nor step without the magic circle or all is lost. It boots not what you hear or see, even should the dead man come to you with his riven skull in his hand, utter no sound. Remem-

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ber that unless I can render him harmless, it is in his power to turn this coveted gold and silver into dry leaves and dead ashes. Dost hear?"

"Aye," answered Bart, "we hear."

With that the man, chanting as before, drew the last line and the circle was complete. Then he raised himself up and holding aloft his hands stood for a while as if offering a silent invocation. He made a weird and curious figure stretched to his full height, his long bony arms seeming to tower above his head, and between them, the waving blood-red plume. I shuddered a little, wishing with all my heart that the matter was finished, but I caught a half smile on Bart's face which showed me that he, at least, still had his wits about him.

I had supposed that the end of the ceremony had come when the magus dropped his long arms, but in this I was mistaken. First he bowed, three times each to the North, to the East, to the South and to the West. Then, again taking the wand, he held it out before him and the stick seemed like a thing alive. Lithe and agile as the man was, the writhing thing in his hands was quicker, for suddenly it leaped from between his palms and

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stood bolt upright as if rooted to the ground. Of all that had happened that night, this was to me the strangest, for in truth the rod appeared a quickened thing, as it shook and shivered at our feet.

The magus with a nod to Bart pointed to the spade, and he, without a word, took it up and in a moment was hard at work.

He had made a deep hole before he tired of his task, but found nothing and at length, stepping out of the space he had digged, he handed the spade to the magus.

That individual took it and went to work for ten minutes or more without result, though we looked eagerly into the rapidly widening pit. At length he passed the spade to me and, seeing that Bart was about to interpose, I forestalled him, sticking my pistol into my belt so that I might have both hands free, and took up the task meaning to do as much or more than any boy.

I was surprised to find how light the soil was and, proud of the ease with which I increased the depth of the excavation, labored with a right good will.

Suddenly the spade ceased to cut through the

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sand and, thinking I had struck a root, I pressed with all my force. But though the object yielded somewhat, I could not dig it up and when I attempted to withdraw the spade it seemed entangled in some soft material. For a moment I knew not what to think and then, with a gasp of horror, it occurred to me that I had come upon the body of the poor fellow thrown in on top to guard the hoard. With a lively shriek I was out of the hole.

"'T is the pirate! The pirate, Bart," I screamed.

"Run! Run!" shouted the magus, as he jumped toward the spot where he supposed our pistols to be lying. "'T is the pirate's ghost. Naught can save you now. The spell is broken!"

The terror the magus managed to put into his tones was very infectious and I seized Bart by the wrist intent upon dragging him away.

"Come, Bart," I cried in desperation, but he would not move.

"Nonsense!" he exclaimed, "I don't see any ghost and I won't run until I do."

At that moment a strange and awesome voice rose above the confusion and I turned toward the

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woods from whence it came. There, just emerging from behind a tree was a headless figure, taller even than the magus, which seemed to waver and glow like a flame. One hand was upraised and moved to and fro, but in the other, held out toward us, was a riven skull with glowing eyes that waxed and waned like candles in a gentle breeze.

With a cry of terror I sank to my knees and hid my face in my hands, too frightened even to attempt to escape,

CHAPTER V

I FIND A TIN TEA-CADDY

I HAD hardly sunk to my knees hiding my face from that horrid apparition at the edge of the clearing, when there came an agonizing cry from the magus.

“Oh, do not shoot!” he called. “I pray you do not shoot or we are all lost.” And I looked up to see Bart facing the headless ghost with a leveled pistol, which he was aiming with much deliberation. Schmuck was near the rock where we had pretended to lay our weapons and was in the act of throwing down angrily one of the billets of wood we had left to deceive him.

“Do not shoot,” he cried again; “I will try to propitiate this evil thing,” and he raised his long arms and began to repeat his rigmarole, stepping out toward the ghastly figure that undulated in the moonlight.

“An you go too close you’re like to get the

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bullet," shouted Bart, his pistol still pointed toward the apparition. "'T is in my mind to find out how much good lead a ghost can carry."

He was about to fire when little Peg flew toward us.

"D-d-do not s-s-shoot," she exclaimed at the top of her voice. At this Bart hesitated.

"Why not?" he demanded, as Peg came up to us.

"There is a-a-another t-t-there who is n-n-no g-g-ghost," she stammered, and even as she said the words the weird figure seemed to crumple up, the ghastly head rolled on the ground where its eyes still glittered among the ferns, and in the pale light we saw another form grappling with the ghost.

"'T is a bony spirit," came the cry of a strange voice from the midst of the struggle. "I warrant it will lie quiet now for a while," it ended with a laugh that sounded very out of place to our overwrought nerves.

Bart at once made for the spot, his pistol still in his hand and I, feeling safer with him, seized Peg and followed.

"I s-s-saw him," chattered Peg, as we went

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along; "he c-c-came out of the w-w-woods just after the f-f-funny b-b-bogie. I w-w-was n't affrighted. It was t-t-too awful, w-w-with its u-undressed h-head." She hopped along much excited but showing little evidence of the fear I had felt.

We came up to the scene of the struggle but it had ceased. The shpook lay upon its back and a stout lad of about fourteen, was sitting upon it, grinning joyously as we approached him.

"'T is not worth wasting good powder on this," said the stranger. "He 's limp enough and so bundled up with his ghost clothes that 't was scarce fair to fight him."

"Let 's see what he looks like," suggested Bart, for there was no face visible, a long garment of some sort being tied a-top of his crown and surmounted by a collar giving him the appearance of having no head; but that he did have one was plain to see, for we could make out the shape of it beneath the flimsy cloth.

"Now keep still," cried Bart to the ghost, "or I'll blow off that other headpiece of yours and make a real wraith of you."

"Aye, master," came a muffled and trembling

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voice from beneath the stuff, "I 'll lay like a lamb, an you promise not to shoot."

At that the strange boy got up, and he and Bart stripped off the garment, displaying a long, thin fellow, not much older than any of us, whose lean and lanky appearance made it plain he was the magus's son.

"And here 's his other head," said the stranger, picking up the skull. "Had I not seen him putting the shiny stuff in its eyes I might have been frightened myself, though I take no great stock in old wives' tales."

He held out the skull for us to look at, and I shuddered at the sight, for the eyes still glowed with the phosphorus that had been rubbed in the sockets.

"How did you see it and where have you come from?" asked Bart, for now that the excitement had subsided for a moment, his curiosity about this boy came uppermost into his mind.

"I was in the woods," answered the other, a little embarrassed, I thought, "and I saw you tie up the horses. I wondered what you were going to do with your lanthorn and spade, so I made up my mind to follow. I had given you time to

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get a start and was about to go on myself, when this fellow came up on another mule and I stopped to see what he was about. He did n't keep me waiting long. After he had tied his beast a little way off from the others, he took out this ghost dress and the skull, and I saw him put the shiny stuff in its eyes and rub it on his clothes. Then he followed the light, which was plain to be seen, and I took after him. He hid behind one tree, waiting, I doubt not, for his signal; and I, behind another."

The boy enjoyed his own story.

"I s-s-saw y-you all the t-t-time," Peg broke in, "but the g-g-ghost was f-f-farther off."

"'T was as good as a play," the lad went on, "and, though I might have stopped him sooner, I was curious to see what the outcome of the matter would be. 'T was as good as a play," he repeated at the end of his story, and laughed heartily.

"Well," said Bart, "'t is lucky you came along or we should have had a dead ghost, right enough, for I was determined to fire."

"'T was my father made me do it," said our panting play-actor, and that reminded us of the fact that we had wholly forgotten the magus and,

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with one accord, we turned to see what he was about and why he had n't joined us.

At first we saw nothing of him, all of us having looked in the direction of the stone where he had last been, but little Peg spied him.

"T-t-there h-h-he is," she cried, pointing, "he's d-d-digging up the t-t-treasure."

And sure enough, there in the hole we had been digging was the magus, shoveling out the dirt for dear life, his thin back rising and falling rapidly as he delved into the earth.

"Hi, there! Get out of that, Schmuck," shouted Bart, but the magus paid no heed, and Bart started toward him.

"You keep this fellow here," he said to the stranger. "'T will be worth your while. I'll attend to the magus."

He started off and I followed, dragging out my pistol from under my cloak, for Schmuck was no boy but a man grown and likely to take more than words to frighten.

When we reached the hole he was working furiously, tossing out spadeful after spadeful of earth, and paid no heed to Bart's order to cease. Indeed it was not till Bart held his pistol to the

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man's head that he seemed to consider our presence.

"I am but earning my fee," he snarled then.

"Your fee!" ejaculated Bart, "when you intended to scare us from our treasure and take it all yourself?"

"I?" cried the magus, affecting indignation, "sure, here's ingratitude! To try to ruin a poor man's reputation when he's found you a fortune."

"Then why did you have your servant dressed like a shpook?" demanded Bart, giving me a meaning glance, "if 't were not your intention to intimidate us."

"You call that fool my servant?" Schmuck burst out angrily. "More like you have employed him to give you an excuse not to pay me."

"Now I know you are a liar, Schmuck, for the boy acknowledged he was your son," said Bart triumphantly.

"Did he so?" muttered the magus savagely; "'t is a good beating he'll get if I'm his father."

"That is a family affair," Bart laughed, "but now, come you out of that," and he aimed the pistol threateningly.

Schmuck hesitated for a moment, then, wincing

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before the pistol that was held so close to him, he thought better of his decision and stepped out of the hole.

"As you please," he grumbled, with a shrug of his narrow shoulders, "but we may as well go home. You would not heed my warning and all my spells are undone. You will find naught in the hole but dirt."

"But there is something there, Bart," I declared. "Do you suppose I screamed like that for nothing? I tell you I dug up the pirate."

For a moment Bart seemed undecided, for he had no liking to leave the magus unguarded while he went after the treasure.

"We'll have Schmuck heave him out," he said at last, in his masterful way. "Into the hole again, magus," he went on; and, although he showed much reluctance, the man of magic complied.

He worked a little; and presently: "There is something here," he admitted.

With considerable effort he lifted a bundle out of the hole and placed it at our feet. This was evidently what my spade had struck and what I had fancied was the body of a dead pirate, for it

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was a huge patchwork quilt, much stained with earth and water. The four corners were gathered together and tied in a bunch with cord. I leaned down and felt of it and, finding that it contained many hard and oddly shaped forms, I at once jumped to the conclusion that they were silver vessels of some sort.

"'T is a pirate hoard, without doubt," I told Bart.

"Good!" he cried, becoming nearly as excited as I was. "Is there aught else in the hole, magus?" he added.

"There's a coffer here," was the surly reply.

"Up with it," Bart commanded, and a moment later a brass-bound coffer stood beside us.

"There's naught else," said Schmuck at last, stepping out and making a motion to put himself at Bart's back and so avoid the pistol; but Bart turned and faced him, still aiming resolutely.

"Nay, you said there was naught there, once before," he remarked; "we'll see for ourselves whether you are telling the truth this time. Go down, Bee, and take a look while I keep this fellow in order."

So down into the hole I went, taking the lan-

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thorn with me, while Bart guarded the magus.

I took up the spade and tested the ground beneath my feet. On one side was a ledge of rock but, when I tried to dig in the earth, I found it nearly as hard, and I came to the conclusion that what I had first handled was so much softer because it had been dug away once before. From this I argued that we had in reality come to the bottom of the pit and that, this time at least, Schmuck was telling the truth. Nevertheless I thought it prudent to search thoroughly, and jabbed the spade here and there in order to assure myself that my reasoning was correct.

Satisfied at last that there was nothing further to be found I set my foot into a crevice in the rock, preparing to come out, but I slipped and dislodged a stone, which in turn loosened another object which rolled into view.

I stooped and picked it up, wondering what it could be and found that it was naught but a common tea-caddy of tin such as we have in the kitchen and, upon further examination, discovered, much to my disappointment, for my imagination had at once filled it with great wealth, that it was empty.

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I stood there for a moment with it in my hands, a little perplexed as to why pirates should have taken the trouble to hide a thing so valueless as a tin tea-caddy. Had it been full of jewels or Spanish gold pieces I could have understood it; but it was empty, and I dropped it back into the hole, little thinking what I did, for my mind was intent upon the problem of why it was there at all.

Meanwhile Bart and the magus stood in silence awaiting my verdict.

"There is naught else of worth here, Bart," I said, climbing up to level ground.

"Then we may think of going back," said Bart. "What puzzles me is how we are to manage the treasure and this magus as well, for it's in my mind to take him to Philadelphia and give him up to the authorities for a thief."

At this the magus fell to his knees with a cry of supplication.

"Nay, young master, do not do that. 'T will be my ruin. Take the treasure and let me go. 'T is all I ask."

"Aye, after you find that you could n't frighten us with your ghosts and make way with it all," answered Bart, making play with his pistol

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toward the magus who visibly quailed when he came within its range.

"Truly the treasure was in some measure mine also," answered the magus with a whine. "Though I knew not when we started what it was we went to seek."

"How do you make that out?" demanded Bart. "'T was plain enough you knew Hans Kalbfleisch, but that gave you no right to the treasure."

"I will confess, young master, if you will let me go my ways," pleaded the diviner. "I ask for no part of the treasure."

"Nay, I make no promises," answered Bart, "but say on, and if I find you are not lying we shall see."

"'T was a Brunswicker found it," the magus began, "but, ere he could remove it, the British, fearing that his regiment would all desert, shipped them off to New York by sea. Ere he left he told me and Hans Kalbfleisch, though to neither of us did he tell the whole of the secret, thinking to make each honest by setting the other as guard to watch his interests. To me he said the spot was between the white stone and the place Hans knew of, but ere Hans and I could come together the

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British evacuated Philadelphia and, though I have searched diligently along the creek for the place, there are so many white stones scattered here and there that the quest was hopeless. 'T was only when you brought word of the other spot that success was possible. So you see, young master, in a way I had some right to it, though I give that up if you will but grant me my liberty."

Somehow he made the matter of his interest plausible to us, and his words explained what had been so mysterious in his behavior all that night. Now, apparently, his only desire was to be away. He seemed to care naught for the treasure since Bart had threatened to jail him as a thief.

After some further parleying Bart consented to give the magus his liberty on one condition.

"You must help carry the treasure to our horses," he insisted, to which the magus, glad to have freedom at any price, readily consented.

I ran and told the others that we had found something in the hole and that we were ready to proceed. At this the stranger proposed that he help, too, and all three of us went back to where Bart was preparing for the return trip.

It was arranged that the magus should

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shoulder the coffer, that his son and the strange boy should manage the bundle between them, while Bart and I walked behind with pistols ready in case there should be any sign of treachery on Schmuck's part.

Peggy brought up the rear, dancing along in the best of spirits and vowing every few minutes that she had never had so much fun in all her life.

Charley was there when we reached the horses, but we scarce thought of him, for Schmuck, setting down his burden, asked permission to depart at once. 'T was plain he was in fever to be off, and it struck me, even then, as strange that he evinced no regret at leaving the treasure he had been so eager to find.

The gray light of early dawn revealed the man more clearly than had the fitful glow of the lantern, and I looked him over curiously.

He was scarce as awe-inspiring as he had been in the darkness, for his suit of satin was frayed here and there and showed signs of much patching; but it was a smear of mud upon his waistcoat, a straight smear of dirt that passed under his ruffle, as if a soiled hand had thrust something within his bosom, that caught my at-

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tention. I looked at the spot intently, scarce knowing why I did so, and suddenly there popped into my head the meaning of it.

"Please, master, let me go," begged Schmuck, once more.

"Shall I give him some money?" Bart whispered to me, "I'll be glad to see the last of him."

"Aye," was my loudly spoken answer, "we'll let him go—after he's given us what he took from the tea-caddy he found in the hole."

CHAPTER VI

BASE METAL

THE change in the face of the magus as I pointed to the smear of mud upon his breast was so sudden and threatening that I was frightened. His thin lips curled back from his teeth and he snarled like an angry dog, showing plainly that what I had suspected was true. It was clear that he was so taken by surprise as to betray himself.

This he evidently realized as soon as we did, for, without a word of denial, he turned in his tracks and started off toward his mule.

So quickly did it all happen that he had almost gained his beast before any of us came to our senses. Then Bart, calling upon him to stop, aimed his pistol. But the magus neither turned nor slackened his speed, and again Bart shouted to him to halt.

But the diviner continued his flight and with a

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final bound flung one leg over his donkey. He would have been off had he not forgotten in his excitement and haste that his animal was tethered and so failed to loose it.

The poor beast tugged at its halter as the magus urged it on, but the strap held, and we hurried forward shouting.

Now, however, we had a new man to deal with. Whatever it was he had hidden, he meant to keep it at any cost, and, dropping on the far side of his animal, he slipped into the woods.

Bart snapped his pistol at him but it missed fire and, with a growl of disappointment, he started in pursuit. In the meantime the strange boy had run with great speed to head the magus off, and, though Schmuck's long legs covered the ground rapidly, he was no match for the stranger who soon overhauled him and, shouting to Bart to come on, threw himself upon the man, and tripped him. Together they fell to the ground, struggling violently, while a moment later Bart reached them and sprang into the fray.

I hoped to see the tussle quickly finished, but the end of the matter was not yet. The magus, in spite of his height was wiry;—more than that,

BASE METAL

he was desperate and fought bitterly. Had the two boys not been exceptionally strong he would undoubtedly have bested them and escaped. But Charley, recovering his courage with the daylight, joined in, and soon they had him trussed up with a halter.

"Now let us see what you have concealed there," Bart exclaimed, panting from his exertions; "I warrant 't is the most valuable part of the treasure, if one may judge from the fight you made to keep it."

He plunged his hand inside the man's shirt and, fumbling about, brought forth a small package, which after a scant look he handed to me.

"'T is not worth the trouble, I vow," he remarked, getting up from the ground, "but take care of it, Bee, and we 'll look it over anon."

I took it in my hand and found it a small packet neatly wrapped in coarse brown paper and tied about a number of times with twine. To the feel,—and being eager I squeezed it more than once,—it was soft and yet stiff too, like starched linen. I confess it was disappointing, but I consoled myself with the thought that Schmuck would not have taken all that trouble for nothing.

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I wanted to open it then and there, but Bart wisely told me to curb my impatience till a more fitting time.

"And now, Schmuck," he went on, regarding the prostrate man at our feet, "get yourself up and march with me to the jail."

The man got to his feet sullenly but made no protest. Indeed he seemed scarce to care what we did with him now. His face was flushed from his exertion and twitched nervously, as if he were under some great strain. I did not like the look of him and preferred that he be allowed to go his way, for I felt sure he was such an one as would remember an injury and bide his time till the chance served to repay, all the while, feeding his bitterness and hate with thoughts of revenge.

"Let him go, Bart," I said, "he has made naught by his tricks and—" I lowered my voice so that none other could hear, "'t would make the matter of our search public did we hand him over to the authorities,—which I think you do not want."

"Now that's well thought of," he answered in a whisper, and then went on loudly to the magus, "We're going to let you off, Schmuck."

BASE METAL

But have a care what you do or we will clap you in jail for the old scoundrel you are."

Bart took my pistol and telling the strange boy to loose the bonds of the magus he bade the latter take his donkey and go.

I expected that Schmuck would be overjoyed at the prospect of keeping his liberty and would hurry away at all speed, but in this I was mistaken. He stood sulkily, his head dropped to his breast, eyeing us venomously from under his brows and muttering to himself the while. Once or twice he started towards his tethered animal, and as often turned back and made as if to speak. Seeming to think better of it he held his tongue. At last, because of an impatient word from Bart, he shook his head and strode over to his mule. Loosening it with an angry jerk, he bestrode the patient little animal and prepared to ride away. But ere he went he turned and again made as if to speak, yet so wrought up was he that he could only give vent to an angry, guttural sort of roar and shake his fist at us.

He looked so funny there in the daylight with his shabby suit of black silk and the silly plume in his hat that, being but children, we could n't

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help laughing at the queer figure he cut and the dumb threat he hurled at us. At last, amid our peals of merriment he rode away, and little Peg who had been a silent but excited spectator of all that had happened called out at the top of her voice:

"G-g-good-by, old g-g-ghost-maker," and this increased our laughter so that our shouts continued long after he had gone from our sight.

"Where's the ghost?" exclaimed Bart, when we were beginning to come to our senses, and we looked around expecting to see the thin youth somewhere in sight; but he, too, had disappeared, and we guessed he had taken advantage of the excitement to steal away.

There was naught left now but to mount and take our treasure back to Denewood where, in safety and seclusion, we could overhaul it at our leisure. Our thoughts naturally turned to the fruit of our adventure and I was eager to be home and discover its value.

But my eyes strayed to the strange boy who had done so much to help us. I now looked at him closely for the first time that morning, and though I liked his face at once, the thing that at-

BASE METAL

tracted my attention was a great scar over his left eye and I remembered the advertisement for the runaway bond boy. I could recollect much of what I had read just before setting out upon this expedition and it all fitted the lad before me. He was dressed in a suit of homespun, wore yarn stockings and on his feet were heeled leathern shoes with brass buckles. There could be no doubt about it, and here also was the explanation of why he was in the woods at night. He was in hiding.

"You have aided us so greatly," I said to him, "is there aught we can do to help you?"

Then as I saw that Bart looked surprised at my taking the matter upon my shoulders, I explained, "I know who he is." Whereat the lad interrupted me with a pleased face.

"I did n't think you 'd remember me, Miss, but I knew you at once."

It was my turn to be surprised and I looked at him closely as he went on.

"Not to say at once neither, because I followed you for ten minutes before I caught up with you, but as soon as you came back into this road here and there was light enough to see, I knew you.

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You 've not changed, although it is two years."

Still I had no recollection of the boy. I wracked my brains to place him, and I said: "At any rate you must let us help you."

But he shook his head.

"I 'm on my way to Philadelphia," he told me. "I mean to be a soldier."

"You can't go into Philadelphia," I cried, clasping my hands. "Don't you know you are advertised for in the news sheets? There's a reward out for you."

"Is that so? But how did you guess it was for me?" the boy asked curiously. "I never told you my name,—though 't is Mark Powell," he added.

"I knew by the scar," I answered, puzzled.

"But I did n't have it then," answered the boy, putting his hand to his head.

"'T is in the newspapers, of course," I explained impatiently, "and you 'll be taken if you go into town."

"I wonder," said the lad, "would Mr. Travers think I was old enough now to make a soldier? Germantown's not far from here, and if I could win to him, he might help me for the sake of that day at the Green Tree Inn—"

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Then at last I knew him for a boy who had led Brother John and me to our horses when they had been hid from us by a pack of Tories who wanted to seize me for the sake of the reward the British had put upon my head, even as now there was a reward upon his. In a moment my resolve was taken.

"Bart," I said, "this boy saved John's life and mine when first I landed in this country, and who knows what he has saved us from to-night? He is a bound boy who has left his master, I know not why, but I think I owe it to him to get him to John."

"I'm not ashamed of leaving my master," announced the lad. "I would have stayed but he wanted to make a Tory spy of me. I mean to buy my freedom as soon as I can earn the money."

"We'll take you to Denewood with us," said Bart, "till we see what John advises."

It was high time for us to be on the road if we were not to have our secret known at home. The two boys quickly loaded our treasure-trove upon the horses and we all mounted and were off.

Then a thought came to plague me.

"Bart," I said, "if we take Mark with us, the

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Mummers will give him up. They think it a duty to return escaped bond-servants to their masters."

"Then we 'll hide him," cried Bart impatiently. "Denewood is big enough to conceal a regiment and men have been hid there before," which was true indeed.

Arriving at Denewood we found many of the servants already stirring, so, with a warning to Charley not to gossip, Peg and I slipped into the house by the secret way, leaving it to Bart to stow the treasure in one of the great barns and to hide Mark in a smoke-house that was unused at that time of the year.

I think the hours never passed so slowly as they did that morning. Mrs. Mummer, in one of her busy humors, was preparing to put up preserves, and that meant plenty of work for me. There were, besides, my regular duties of dusting and the like that had to be gone through every morning, and little Peg and I could hardly restrain our impatience. But we dared not show how anxious we were to be off, or to neglect anything, for fear we should betray our secret.

At length we were free, for the time at least,

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and ran to the barn as fast as our legs could carry us, all the while a little uncertain what Bart had been doing, for he of course, as a man, had no household duties.

"W-w-will he o-o-open them before we g-g-get there?" asked Peg, in a distressed voice.

"I don't know," I answered, "but we'll soon see."

We found Bart walking up and down the floor of the barn, guarding his treasures.

"At last!" he cried, when he saw us. "I thought you were never coming. What in the world has kept you?"

"We had to dust and to lay out linen and—and, oh, a score of things which all take time," I explained. "But what was in the bundle and the coffer? I am dying to know."

"Think you I would be so mean as to open them before you came?" asked Bart. "They are as you left them and we will look at what they contain, together."

"Now it was good of you to wait!" I exclaimed, for I knew he was, if anything, more impatient than we.

"'T was all I could do to keep from looking,"

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he answered, "and I have been feeling. I'm sure the bundle contains gold vessels of some kind. Probably stolen from Spanish churches. But come, I can wait no longer."

So impatient that we could hardly restrain ourselves we cut the cords binding the four corners of the quilt and as we opened it all three of us bent forward to see the contents. A gray mass of pitchers, cups, bowls, platters and such like things fell out and Bart, touching it with his foot, gave a grunt of dissatisfaction.

"'T is only silver, after all," he murmured, and began to rummage through the objects to discover the gold and jewels he had hoped for. I picked up a small pitcher and went with it to the light. My heart had sunk with the suspicion that we might expect a still further disappointment, and, indeed, upon examination I discovered that our find was not even silver.

"'T is but pewter, Bart," I told him. "We have been fooled. 'T is worth naught."

"It can't be!" he cried in distress, but though he searched through the pile of utensils there was naught but pewter to reward him.

"Now this is too bad!" he exclaimed; "but may-

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hap the chest is what we're looking for," and at once he started to pry open the small coffer.

Again we were doomed to disappointment. All we found was a quantity of little phials and packages.

I picked up one and read "Ipecacuana," on another "Jesuits' Bark," then "Quicksilver," "Tartar Emetic," "Calomel" and "Cantharides" in quick succession. 'T was needless to go further. It was plain enough that we had found a medicine chest with naught else of value in it, and, so far, our quest had brought us little profit.

Bart's disappointment was keener than ours. He had wanted to win a commission and now he saw no hope of it.

"It must have been a poor party of pirates that buried that stuff!" he exclaimed, as he paced the floor of the barn once or twice, in anger and chagrin. "The whole of it is not worth a pound of good hard money."

"I do not think that pirates had aught to do with it," I answered. "'T is more like some Hessian loot, picked up as they went along, and buried until a more convenient time came to dispose of it. Those fellows will take anything, you know,

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and the ground was too soft to have been dug up very long ago."

"Aye, that 's it," he agreed; "but," he went on, after a moment's thought, "why should old Schmuck have been so keen for it? He would n't have been so anxious after a lot of paltry pewter."

"Perchance he was befooled, too, or else 't was the package!" I cried, clapping my hands to where it still lay beneath my kerchief. I had forgotten it and in another moment I had it out, and we examined it critically.

"Nay, you may have it," said Bart, who had fingered it excitedly when I handed it to him. "There are no jewels nor gold in it. Whatever it is, you may keep it as a remembrance, for I am sure 't is of little worth," and he shrugged his shoulders indifferently, for he was sore disappointed.

The packet was quite clean save for a trace here and there of the magus's muddy fingers. It was wrapped so carefully that as I looked at it, the thought flashed over me that this was a great deal of trouble to take for a thing of small value.

BASE METAL

Yet what could it be? I turned it in my fingers meditatively.

"Let's a-a-all g-g-guess," suggested Peggy, ever ready for a game.

"And whoever guesses right shall keep it," cried Bart.

"Nay," I said gaily, "you cannot dispose of my property, sir. You have already given it to me."

"W-w-what do you t-think it is, B-b-bee?" asked Peggy, pinching the package. "I t-t-think 't is a s-s-set of r-ruffles."

"That's your guess, is it, Peg?" said Bart. "Very well. I think it is a lock of a fair lady's hair."

"A good, fat lock it must be," I laughed disdainfully.

"Well, Miss, since you are so wise, what is it?" demanded Bart good-naturedly.

"You could never guess," I answered, "but know you not that a gipsy told me I should find fortune across great waters? Now I've crossed the ocean and this is the fortune, of course."

"Nay, now," Bart put in, "when I heard that tale before 't was happiness you were to find

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across the waters. Think you happiness comes packed in such small parcels?"

"Oh, c-c-children, q-q-quit your q-q-quarreling," said Peg, "and do let us s-s-see what it is."

So with care I began to untie the string and this took some time. At length it was free, and off came the paper. Inside this we found another covering of parchment to keep it dry and beneath this again a leaf of silvered paper. So carefully was the little bundle wrapped that, in spite of all our disappointments, our interest revived and we put our heads together intent upon what we should discover.

"This grows exciting," said Bart, "my heart misgives me that I did wrong to give it away so lightly. Mayhap there's a portrait of the lovely lady as well as the lock of her hair."

"'T is mine now, at any rate," I made answer and carefully taking off the silvered paper I held up the contents of the parcel for all to see. A fortune, indeed, for 't was money I had in my hand.

"Continental shin-plasters," scoffed Bart, "that even Hessians would n't bother to carry away."

BASE METAL

"Bart!" I cried, as I examined them, "they are Bank of England notes."

With a shout of joy he took them from me.

"Aye, you 're right, Bee!" he exclaimed as he fingered them, "they 're as good as any hard money ever coined. We 've come upon the treasure at last, and now let 's count it."

It must have made a strange picture had any eye been there to see it. Two little maids and one great boy sitting together on the floor of the barn, before them a patchwork quilt covered with all sorts of pewter utensils, and in their careless fingers a fortune. Through the open door a streak of sunshine streamed in, while two hens and a pigeon pecked hesitatingly, turning their heads from side to side to eye the three children.

Something, I know not what, caused me to look up and at the same moment Peg cried out:

"Who was that looking in at the d-d-door?"

All three of us turned. A shadow seemed to stir in the sunshine, and a hand that had been slyly pushing the door wider was suddenly withdrawn. At least I thought I saw a hand withdrawn, but after we had run out to see who spied

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upon us and had found no one, I could not be sure, though Peg still vowed she had seen something move.

CHAPTER VII

A-TOP THE GARDEN WALL

WE went into the barn again after looking about outside, satisfied that both Peg and I had but imagined that we saw some one spying upon us; and Bart sat down to count the notes.

"Two thousand, four hundred pounds I make it," he said finally. "There's more than enough to buy my commission, and General Washington will be right glad to have it."

"N-n-nay, B-b-bart," Peggy put in, "y-y-you gave it all to B-b-bee, you k-k-know you did."

"Aye, that's so," Bart admitted, all the joy dropping out of his voice. "You have found your fortune indeed, Bee. 'T is a lucky sixpence you carry," and he would have given me the money, but I pushed it away from me.

"What manner of maid think you I am, Bart?" I cried indignantly. "Do you expect me to hold you to a word spoken in jest? 'T is yours, of

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course, and now you will have your commission."

"B-b-but with all that m-m-money, B-b-bee," Peg said soberly, "you c-c-could go b-back to England and h-h-help your b-brothers."

"Aye, if the money was mine," I answered, "but it belongs to the cause. If Bart wants to pleasure me more than I can say, he will let me have enough to buy Mark Powell's time from his master. That will not be robbing the cause, for it will provide it with a good soldier, I'm sure."

"'Tis well thought of, Bee," exclaimed Bart, all smiles again; "there's enough and to spare. Now take it and put it in safety," and he placed the bundle in my hands."

I folded the notes and re-wrapped them in the silvered paper, then, putting all inside the parchment, I stowed the packet in my bodice.

We gathered the quilt together again and hid it and the coffer in the hay until we could make up our minds how to explain our find to Mrs. Mummer. This done, I went to the house with the intention of leaving the money in a safe place, but as I entered the door I ran straight into Mrs. Mummer.

"La, child!" she exclaimed at sight of me,

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"what's wrong with you? You look fair 'mazed."

"There's naught wrong," I answered, though I understood well enough that my face was still flushed with excitement, and I was in two minds whether or not to tell her all about it; but, pleased with the thought of having a secret, I held my tongue.

"Then," said Mrs. Mummer a little crossly, for she knew, I think, that I was hiding something from her and liked it not, "then off to the garden with you and pick me some apricots for conserves. If I send Clarinda I am like to get naught but mushy fruit, and beside I need her to pound the loaf sugar. Pick them carefully, Miss Bee, for the Denewood conserves require the choicest fruits."

I should have liked to have rid myself of the money in my bodice, but that would have made necessary some explanation to Mrs. Mummer who was keen enough to scent a secret, and so, without further talk on the matter, I took up a basket and ran to the garden intent upon finishing my task as quickly as possible.

The lower garden, or the "Old Garden" as we

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sometimes call it because it was planted years and years ago, was set upon the crest of the far hillside so that it was warm and sunny at all seasons. High stone walls had been built about it in the English fashion and on these were trained our choicest grapes and wall-fruit. In the beds grew Mrs. Mummer's stock of simples; lavender, dill, rosemary, sage, spearmint and peppermint, all flourished there, beside the fragrant stocks and wallflowers. It was a most lovely place. The smell of it brought back to me, as nothing else in America did, my old home across the sea, and my thoughts strayed to Granny and my two brothers.

A ladder stood against the wall beside the apricot tree and I mounted it, only half thinking of what I was doing, lost in a dream of days gone by. Halfway up I stopped to eat an apricot, so tempting and luscious did it look, and as I took my first bite I heard the door in the far wall open and shut quietly. I did not turn at once, thinking it was one of the gardeners or perhaps Bart, but hearing no further movement, an uneasy feeling came over me and I looked to see who had entered.

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Had I not had my teeth in the apricot I should have cried out as I recognized the tall, lank form of Schmuck, with his son beside him, coming towards me in a half-crouching attitude as though they stalked game. 'T was certain the magus had been watching us since we left him in the woods and that his was the hand I saw on the barn door. Doubtless he knew I had the money.

I was alone, so far from the house that calling for help would be useless, and quite at the mercy of a man who surely must be desperate to have followed me like this.

As they crossed the garden, father and son separated, thus cutting off my escape from the opposite sides of the enclosure and my heart sank as I saw that I was trapped. I did not hide from myself the fact that Schmuck was a dangerous man who was like to have little compunction as to how he gained his ends.

But, though I was frightened, it had never been my way to stand helpless without making an effort in my own behalf and so, scarce reasoning why I did it, I scurried up the ladder and stepped on the top of the wall. There I saw I could not well be harmed if only I were able to drag the

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ladder up after me, for the wall was all of twelve feet high. I seized and tugged at it with all my strength. At that Schmuck, noting what I was about, gave a low cry and started on a run toward me, his son following suit; and, though I tugged my hardest, it was plain that I would fail in my attempt; for not only was the ladder heavy, but the awkwardness of my position on the top of the wall gave me but small purchase room in which to handle so long an object.

I was quite sure that the magus would reach me ere I succeeded in my task when by great good fortune one of his huge feet caught in a black currant bush and he fell flat.

His son stopped to raise him and was well rated for his pains.

"At her, you fool!" cried the magus, seeming not to care how much noise he made. "At her, for if she have the ladder how can we win to her?"

At that the lad came towards me with redoubled speed but I had been hard at work dragging the ladder up inch by inch and just before he reached me it struck a balance, the lighter end rising high off the ground as he leaped into the air to catch it like a dog after a bone. A moment

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later I swung it around and stood looking down, safe for the time being at least and not a little excited and proud that I had outwitted them.

The magus, getting slowly to his feet now that there was no necessity for haste, came toward me rubbing his thin hands together and smiling up at me with a fine show of graciousness.

"The boy has turned into a young miss," he said, in a winning, obsequious way, which alarmed me more than his frank anger. "I hope you do not think we meant to harm you?"

"I'm sure of that," I replied, with as much bravado as I could put into my voice.

"I'm glad to hear you say so," he went on, still rubbing his bony hands together and grinning up at me; "it seemed to me that you were somewhat hasty in mounting the wall, as if perchance you were afraid."

"Nay, I'm not afraid," I returned promptly, "but the garden makes a fine show from the top of a wall."

"And the ladder a-top insures a safe descent," he put in, with a little sneer which he tried to hide.

"And also gives me leave to choose my com-

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pany," I retorted. "But come," I continued, putting on a bold front, "what are you here for? Out with it and let's have done with this fooling."

"I come but for my due," he answered civilly enough. "'T is only just that I have a fair share of the treasure we found."

"A fair share!" I cried back at him, "you would have kept all the money, an you had had your way. Had you been less eager for the whole you might have had a share."

"Nay, 't is not the money I want," he answered sharply. "That you may keep, for all of me. Give me the map and I shall not bother you further."

"The map?" I echoed. "I have no map."

"Now do not tell me a falsehood," he broke in harshly, finding it difficult to keep to his friendly rôle. "'T was with the package, and that I saw in your hands. Moreover, you still have it, for I have been watching you every minute. Come, give it up and you will see the last of me."

"You are altogether mistaken," I told him. "There was naught in the package save the money, and that you shall not have."

"I tell you I don't want the money," he fair-

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screamed, losing all control of himself in a second. "Keep the money,—but the map I'll have, if I'm forced to drag it from you."

He had thrown off all pretense now, and as he ended he leaped up in an effort to scale the wall, but he could not grasp the top and he dropped back fuming.

"Stay you here," he shouted at his son, "and see that she does not escape. I'm going outside."

He started off to the gate, but 't was plain he knew not the lay of the land, for beyond the garden wall the ground fell away sharply and there was near twenty feet fall below me. Otherwise I might have dropped down and so away to safety before either man could catch me.

The magus needed but a glance outside to show him the uselessness of coming at me from there and he pushed through the gate again so furiously, that, feeling safe enough, I was ready to smile. But my elation was only momentary, for he stopped at the gate and examined it intently.

At once I saw what was in his mind. Here was a possible means of gaining the top of the wall. The door had a strong latch and stout

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cross-bars and was a good enough stairway for an active man.

The magus wasted no time but ordered his son to climb the gate while he stood watch over me. The boy demurred, but his father, enraged by now at the difficulties he was encountering where he thought all would be swift and easy, cuffed him over the head, and the lad ran off whimpering to do as he was bidden.

Now indeed was my position perilous and I looked about me rather hopelessly for a chance to escape. The magus, noting my dismay, called out to me.

"Give me the map, young miss, and you 'll see the last of us, I tell you."

"But I have no map," I made answer, stamping my foot with impatience and vexation.

Again the magus broke out in a rage vowing to have what he searched for, come what might, and threatening me with all sorts of bodily hurts. The man was fairly beside himself and his anger was so high that I knew his threats were not idle ones and if I fell into his clutches I was likely to suffer.

As I looked about me for a means of escape I

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realized that there was none and that my only **salvation** was to keep the lad from scaling the wall. **This** I prepared to do at any cost and picking up my basket I hurried along the broad coping.

It was impossible for me to prevent the boy from gaining the top of the gate but, while my strength held out, I was determined to keep him off when he tried to swing to the wall. Once above him I knelt to make my position the more secure and arranged my only weapons, the basket and two apricots, where I could reach them easily.

The magus had followed my course and now all three of us were at the gate.

"Up with you," he cried to his son, who had been making ineffectual efforts to mount and, indeed, showed plainly that he liked not the business. "Up with you, while I hold the gate steady."

There was a menace in the man's voice that nerved me to do my best.

I waited breathlessly while the magus's son climbed slowly up and, as his head topped the gate, I let fly one of my apricots with all the strength I possessed and was lucky enough to hit him squarely in the eye.

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"'T was over ripe for conserves," I cried, laughing a little hysterically, as I saw the boy, with a wry face, loosen his hold and drop to the ground.

But he received scant consideration from his father.

"Why have you let go?" shrieked Schmuck. "Up with you, fool. Art afraid of a huzzy on a wall?"

"Go up yourself," the lad muttered sulkily, wiping his face clean of the apricot pulp. "Perchance you'd like an eye full of soft fruit. I doubt not she'll kick my head off next time."

This gave me an idea and I pulled off my stout leathern shoes and grasped one of them by the toe.

"Aye," I called down to him, shaking my shoe, and assuming a courage I was far from feeling, "come up and have your ears boxed with this next time."

"Nay, I'll not come," cried the lad.

"And I'll lay my stick about your shoulders an you stay here," shouted his father. "Which think you, dolt, can strike the shrewder blow?"

Truly I found it in my heart at that moment

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to be sorry for the lad, who, though he would have left me in peace, was forced to play the enemy.

Up he started again, the magus giving him a boost, and I threw my last apricot—and missed. Then I took up my shoe and made to strike at the fingers holding to the top of the door, but even as I was in the act of striking I let the shoe fall. I could not bring myself to hit his bare hand, though as I hesitated he reached out and tried to seize me. I drew back hastily and at the same moment the magus swung the gate in toward the wall and his son, with a hitch upward, brought his head and shoulders to a level with me. I jumped to my feet with the intention of retreating along the wall, but ere I started I meant to make one last effort so, picking up the basket, I brought it down over the head of the boy, bonneting him.

With an effort to dodge the descending basket the lad leaned forward and in so doing lost his balance and sprawled across the top of the gate with the basket hanging over his head and his arms striking out wildly like a swimmer's.

At the same moment there came a shout and,

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to my great surprise and relief I saw Brother John running toward us at top speed, his drawn sword clutched in his hand.

But I was not the only one who saw him. The magus, too, had looked about him, and, with the snarl of a beaten dog, he whipped through the gate and ran across the field to the wood beyond at an amazingly rapid rate.

The boy, however, still sprawled across the gate when Brother John came up.

"Now, what's the meaning of this?" he cried in a great voice, and would have cut the lad down then and there, I doubt not,—for he saw from my face that I had been in danger,—had I not stopped him.

"If they've hurt so much as a hair of your head, Bee," John said, his voice nigh breaking, "they shall pay for it with their miserable lives. What is the meaning of it? Tell me," and reaching up he grabbed the boy by the leg and pulled him to the ground none too gently.

"'T was the other who was at the bottom of it," I hurried to tell him, for in truth Brother John was much wrought up and in no mood for trifling. The lad's life hung by a hair. "Do

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not harm him, brother. He would not have hurt me, I am sure."

As if in answer to this there came a long, wailing sort of groan from under the basket which still stuck to the boy's head and so funny did it sound, and so pitiful withal, that we could not help laughing, and that put an end to Brother John's fierce anger.

"But tell me the meaning of it?" he asked again, "and do come down from that wall before you fall off and, mayhap, break your neck. How did you get there and—?"

"Nay, do not fret about me," I interrupted, "I'll be with you in an instant," and running back to the ladder I slid it to the ground and in a few minutes I was beside Brother John who still stood guard over the magus's son.

"Let us go to the house," I said; "I have a long tale to tell you."

CHAPTER VIII

THE MAGUS AND HIS MAP

A GROAN from under the basket reminded us that there was another matter to decide before I could tell my tale, and Brother John looked down at the magus's son with a smile. The basket still covered his head and he lay flat, giving forth monstrous pitiful sounds of distress.

"'T is a curious basket of fruit you have there, Bee," he said, nodding towards the prostrate boy.

"'T is hardly fruit, brother," I replied. "'T is more of a vegetable, I'm thinking. A squash or a pumpkin belike." At which there was another deep wail from the lad.

"Well, suppose we have a look at it," John proposed, and leaning down he tugged at the basket and, after some trouble, removed it, disclosing a thin, red face, much swollen from weeping.

Now that I saw the lad in a good light, the resemblance to his father was striking, but he did not have the evil countenance of his elder, and,

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moreover, I knew that his part had been forced upon him so that I was sorry for the boy. As the basket came off his head he rose to his knees and held up his hands to me.

"Save me, Miss, save me!" he begged in piteous tones. "I am sore afraid."

"He will not harm you," I answered, indicating John, for I thought, of course, the reference was to him.

"'T is not the gentleman I mean," he pleaded, "but my father. Save me from my father."

Both John and I echoed the words in surprise and the boy hastened to explain.

"My father will kill me for this day's work. He grows worse daily and since the British came he has stopped at nothing. A year ago he was honest enough and, though I played the shpook, it was not as last night, when my father meant to seize the treasure, but in order to excuse his failures when naught was found—as how should there be, considering that he is but an ordinary man?"

"But the wand moved," I broke in. "It bent down to the ground and seemed a thing alive. Is there no virtue in it?"

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"Nay," answered the boy, "'t is done with the palms of the hands. 'Tis a trick that dozens use. But 't was innocent enough, and sometimes they really did find water in the places he made the wand point to. But of late he has been mad to find the map he told you of. What it is about I know not. Some evil men in the British army have fired his desire and he vows he will be rich beyond the bounds of avarice an he find that for which he seeks. He is no longer the man he was; I pray you save me from him,"

"But what can I do with a lad like you?" exclaimed John, half amused and half perplexed.

"I would go for a soldier," cried the boy, still blubbering, and though I was sorry for him this was too funny a thought, and I burst out laughing.

"Nay, I am not afraid of bullets," protested the boy. "'T is only my father and his calling that make me tremble. I could be a soldier—or if not that, I could be your servant." He added this last appeal directly to Brother John.

"What is your name?" asked John, in a more kindly tone than he had yet used toward the boy.

"My father christened me Cagliostro," came

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the hesitating answer, "but, please sir, 't is such a silly name that I 'd liefer be called Bill."

At this there was another laugh, in which the boy joined in an embarrassed croak.

"Bill it shall be," agreed Brother John, "so come along with us and we 'll decide what is to be done with you."

We turned the boy over to Mrs. Mummer to be fed and, after finding Bart, settled ourselves in the great hall to tell Brother John of the night's adventure. It was not without misgivings that I began the tale, and Bart, too, was by no means sure how John would view the matter. We told him all, just as it happened, though his face became graver as we proceeded. At last it was out and we waited for the scolding we felt would come; but, with a shake of his head, Brother John rose to his feet and took a turn or two up and down the room before he spoke. It was plain that he was indeed much upset. At first he seemed little interested in the story itself.

"Bart," he began at last, and his voice trembled a little in his earnestness, "this matter is done with, and I am not one to bluster about what might have happened; but, for the future, if you

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have any hairbrained adventures afoot, remember and go elsewhere for help in them. Do you understand, sir, what I mean?"

"Yes, Cousin John," answered Bart meekly, "but the treasure was worth the finding."

"Nay," Brother John exclaimed roundly, "all the treasure in the world is not worth the risk of anything happening to Beatrice. Think you there is gold enough in all the earth to replace her? No, sir, she is all I have, and when I think of what might have happened to her with that desperate man Schmuck—for he is desperate—I scarce know how to contain myself."

"Oh, Brother John," I said, going up to him and taking his hands, "I'm all right, and—and it was n't all Bart's fault—I wanted to go."

He looked down at me earnestly and then breathed a deep sigh.

"Well, we will not think any more about it, but you must promise me, Bee, that you will not go off again on harum-scarum adventures of this sort. I should be fit for nothing if I thought that the minute my back was turned you would be putting your life in danger on some fool's errand. Come now, promise."

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"But, Brother John," I protested, "you see Washington *does* need money,—am I never to do anything for the cause? Indeed I feel that some time you might yourself tell me I should go."

"Nay, I doubt that," he answered, "but if such a time should come ask yourself, 'would Jack tell me to do this?' and if you can honestly answer 'he would,' then you may go. But let it be understood, once and for all, that such permission would not include wild hunts with Bart along the Wissahickon for pirate treasure."

I made the promise he asked and we shook hands to bind it.

"And now to settle this matter of the two boys," he went on, "where is Mark Powell? He is a good lad and I shall take him into my company. I owe him much for his work last night."

"He is hiding in the smoke-house," said Bart. "Shall I fetch him in?"

"Aye," answered Brother John, and Bart ran off eagerly.

It was fine to see the welcome John gave Mark Powell, shaking him by the hand and promising to give him his wish to serve the cause. And

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Mark, too, was fine and stood straight and tall beside Brother John and I noted that they were much of the same build, and though the boy was younger, his face looked older than he was because of the hard life he had been forced to live. Indeed he had grown most wonderfully since we first saw him in the Jerseys.

Upon inquiry we found that he had not eaten since noon of the day before, so off he too was sent to Mrs. Mummer, with instructions that he was to be well filled in the shortest possible time.

"And now," said Brother John, "let us get at what seems to me the most important part of this business. What is this map that the magus demanded of Bee?"

"I saw naught of any such thing," I answered, bringing out the package of money, "but he seemed so certain I had it that perhaps it's here after all."

I laid the notes, still wrapped in the parchment and silvered paper, on the table and while Bart and I looked on Brother John began to search carefully through the bundle.

Nothing showed upon the parchment covering and then the silvered paper was examined. The

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under side of this was white and might have served the purpose, but though we scrutinized it carefully no mark was visible upon it.

Next Brother John took up each note in turn, thinking something might have been drawn thereon; but nothing was found.

"The magus was mistaken," I said, as he laid the last one down.

"Nay, be not so sure of that," answered John, "we have n't yet finished our inspection," and he began again to take up the bills one by one and hold them to the light.

"Why are you doing that?" asked Bart.

"Because," explained John, "it is sometimes possible to split such notes and conceal a thin bit of paper between the halves before they are pasted down again. I've known of despatches sent in that way by spies."

This gave a new interest to the search but it came to nothing. No scrap of anything that could be described as a chart, naught save the notes themselves and the silvered wrapper, could we discover.

Bart and I exchanged hopeless glances.

"Was there any other paper?" asked John.

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"There was some brown paper, and some cord," I answered.

"That 's in the barn," said Bart.

"Fetch it," commanded Brother John; but when he had returned with the outside wrapper we were again disappointed, for there was naught upon it save a spot or two of dirt left by Schmuck's fingers when he took the package from the tea-caddy.

"I think your magus must have been trying to impress you for some reason or other," was Brother John's final conclusion.

"Nay, brother," I insisted, "I have no doubt at all that the magus believed that I had what he sought and that it was not the money. He said I might keep that, and I feel sure he would not have taken the risk he did unless it was for something of vast importance. 'T is very mysterious," I ended.

"Nay," laughed Brother John, "there's no mystery here. Good Bank of England notes are plain enough for all to read. But what is to be done with them?"

"They're Bee's," answered Bart, so ruefully that we all laughed.

"'T was my plan, brother," I explained, "to

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pay off Mark Powell's bond and let him go to the war as my substitute, seeing that I cannot go myself. The rest will purchase Bart's commission."

"'T is a good plan," agreed John, "and I will think about it. But in the meantime I will keep the notes and if your magus turns up again send him to me. I should love to meet him for, say five minutes. I warrant he would be a more honest magus thereafter."

He picked up the notes, stuffed them into the pocket of his coat and was about to throw the piece of silvered paper into the fireplace when I stopped him.

"Let me have that, brother," I said; "'t will cut up into fine jewelry for Peg's dolly."

"Aye, so it will," he answered, and handed it to me.

That was the end of the talk about our adventure and later on I carried the piece of silvered paper upstairs with me and put it under a cut glass bottle on my dressing-table to keep it from being blown away, and there it lay for a time, forgotten.

Brother John took the two boys away to Phila-

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delphia with him that same afternoon, and Mark, when he was told of the plan that he was to serve as a substitute for me, regarded the matter much more seriously than I did. To me it was half a joke, but he looked at it otherwise.

"Miss Beatrice," he said earnestly, just before he started out, "you need not fear that your substitute will not do his duty."

"Nay, I have no fear of that," I answered, giving him my hand, "and Mark," I added, "I trust you to look after my brother, as I would were I there."

"Aye, with my life," answered Mark, and I knew that he meant it.

"And I'll shine his boots till he can see his face in them," said Bill Schmuck, who was wholly delighted at the decision that he was to go as John's body servant.

There was no trouble in arranging for Mark's freedom from service and a day or two later word came to me from John that my substitute was on his way to join the troop under Captain McLane who was with Washington outside New York.

So with one thing and another the days passed

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quickly enough and I forgot all about the magus and his mysterious map.

One evening, however, the matter was brought back to me in a startling way. I went up to my room and as I opened the door I gave an exclamation of surprise and dismay. Everything was in the utmost confusion. Littered from end to end were the contents of my bureau drawers and closets; frocks, shoes, ribbons and I know not what else were strewn helter-skelter about the chamber. Every pocket was turned inside out, no box was too small to be emptied, even the bed was pulled apart and the mattress drawn half way off, showing how thorough had been the search. My dressing-table was stripped of its contents, the bottles and brushes thrown down and the cover torn off. Nothing was injured, yet everything was displaced; and I knew not what to make of it.

I called Mrs. Mummer who came with Clarinda, both of them so dumbfounded that they could not speak for some moments.

"'Deed, Miss Bee," murmured Clarinda, at length, "looks lak you had a big wind in here all

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to you'self," and that was a true description of what the place looked like.

Mrs. Mummer, more practical, was seeking an explanation.

"There cannot be a thief in this house," she murmured half to herself, though indeed such a thought was almost impossible.

"Let us see if anything has been taken," I suggested, and we went to work to put the place in order.

It took a good hour of hard labor, but at length most of the things were in their proper places again, and yet nothing was missing.

"'T is passing strange," said Mrs. Mummer. "I cannot understand it."

"What 's dat shinin'?" asked Clarinda, pointing to a spot of light that shone on the carpet far back under the bed.

"Fetch it out," said Mrs. Mummer, and Clarinda got to her knees and scrambled on the floor.

"'T is a piece of silvered paper, ma'am," came the muffled voice from under the bed, and at that there popped into my head an explanation of what it all meant.

"The magus is hunting for his map," I thought

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to myself, but aloud I said, "Give me the paper, Clarinda," and when she had done so I looked at it again carefully, but there was naught upon it.

CHAPTER IX

A BALL FOR LOYAL LADIES

NOT many days later Brother John was back at Denewood and brought me word that Mark Powell was at the front and that Bill Schmuck was busy blacking his shoes and taking care of his clothes in so earnest a way that there was danger they would be worn out by brushing. But he had other tidings that interested us all very much indeed.

He came in while we were at our noonday meal and after greeting us he made his announcement.

"I have news for the ladies," he began, taking a paper from his pocket. "There is to be a great ball in Philadelphia given for the French officers, but," and he began to read from the slip he held, "it is also to be given 'in honor of the young ladies who manifested their attachment to the cause of virtue and freedom by sacrificing every convenience to their love of country,' and you are

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invited," he ended, pointedly turning to Peg and me, who were seated together, and ignoring Polly and Betty on the other side.

"Think you not they are too young?" put in Mrs. Mummer, from behind my chair where she had been standing since Brother John had come in.

"Nay, now, I am p-p-past s-s-six!" cried Peg, indignantly, "and that 's no c-c-child. And B-b-bee's turned f-f-fourteen."

"They have naught fit to wear," said Mrs. Mummer. "Miss Polly and Betty will do well enough—!"

"But the Mischianza ladies are not invited," said Brother John, at which the two girls tossed their heads disdainfully.

"I vow, 't would be a dull affair without the English gentlemen," said Polly, with a most grown-up air.

"B-b-betty had s-s-small f-fun out of the Mischianza," commented Peggy right gleefully. "'T is true she saw the p-p-pageant but she m-m-missed the b-b-ball and c-c-cried her eyes out. She t-t-told me s-so hers-self."

"That will not help her now," said Brother

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John. " 'T was taken ill that they, the children of a good Whig, should have shown their faces there at all."

Now this Mischianza had been a wonderful affair given in Philadelphia by the British officers in honor of Sir William Howe on his departure for England, and the ladies of the city who had accepted invitations to it were not well thought of by the patriots who liked not such feastings and dancing with the enemy while the Continental troops were starving at Valley Forge. Now that the Americans were once more in possession, this ball was given to honor those ladies who had refused to accept the lavish hospitality of the British because their hearts were with the cause.

"I shall not cry with disappointment this time, you may be sure," Betty burst out and with that the two flounced from the room.

"They're in a r-r-rare temper now," chuckled Peg and we all laughed.

"But there is naught fit for Miss Bee to wear," Mrs. Mummer insisted, still thinking of my finery.

"Nay, dress them plainly," said Brother John. "There will be time enough for fine feathers when

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the war is over. At present 't is better taste not to exceed in luxury those of our neighbors who have been less lucky than ourselves."

" 'T would be a pleasure to dress her fittingly," Mrs. Mummer mourned, for she had ever an eye to finery and talked constantly of the silks and laces she would have for me by and by.

"Do not be cast down, Mrs Mummer," Brother John laughed. "The most distinguished party I ever attended was one given by the aides-de-camp in memory of the winter just passed at Valley Forge—and no one was admitted there who had a whole suit to his back! So you see your girls will not depend upon finery for their consideration."

For Peg and me the prospect of the ball was very exciting, but in spite of the fact that the two other girls pretended to scorn our party I knew, nevertheless, that they would have given much if they had been going. So I was really glad when a day or so later, after it had been found that, without the Mischianza ladies there would not be enough females, they too received invitations.

At first they could scarce make up their minds to go, but at length Polly hit upon an idea that

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gave them their desires and at the same time saved their pride.

"After the Mischianza, 't will be like a country dance, I fear," she said, shaking her blonde head languidly, "but it might make people think ill things of father's patriotism if we absent ourselves, so we must e'en show our faces at it."

Mrs. Mummer, acting upon Brother John's advice, planned simple little frocks for Peggy and me which to us seemed both suitable and very pretty. She offered the same to the other girls but they would have none of her help, so she did not press it upon them. Had it been possible they would have been off to Philadelphia to the mantua-makers', for Polly had plenty of money given her by her father and her expenses were but trifling while she was with us. The servants at Denewood did not expect the monstrous vails which were the custom in England, where a guest upon leaving the house of a friend, even though he had but dined there, found all the servants standing in a row expecting gifts. So extravagant had the custom become, ere I left two years before, that Her Majesty, the Queen, objected to the amount she was expected to give and denied

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herself the pleasure of visiting some of the noble houses on that account. However, Polly and Betty, after several attempts to wheedle Mrs. Mummer into letting them go to the city, left off trying to coax her.

As the days passed Peggy and I speculated not a little upon what the two girls would wear to the ball, but they maintained a great secrecy in the matter and vowed it made but little difference at so unfashionable a function.

One evening, however, I found Polly talking at the gate with a buxom German market-woman, who was mounted upon a broad-backed horse with great pannier-baskets hung at each side. She seemed a queer person for the modish Polly to be conversing with so earnestly, for that young lady was very haughty and wont to scorn those who were below her in station; but, though I was curious, she vouchsafed me no explanation and slipped past me into the house without a word, leaving me to think what I pleased of the interview.

I was not long left in doubt about it. The very next day Peggy came to me much excited, her big round eyes shining with interest.

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"F-f-for all their a-a-airs," she burst out, "t-t-those two great g-girls are naught b-but b-b-babies. What think you, Bee? They are upstairs p-playing with a d-d-doll."

"Really?" I exclaimed.

"Y-y-y-yes, r-r-really," she replied. "They h-h-hided it away, b-b-but I s-s-saw it all the s-s-same."

"Come along," I said, my curiosity aroused no less than Peg's, "we 'll make them show it us," and we ran up to the girls' room.

Sure enough, Polly and Betty were there and hard at work. On the table before them were several breadths of gay flowered silk and in a chair facing them was a most wonderful small lady.

"T-t-there it is, B-b-bee!" exclaimed Peg, pointing, and then turning to the others, "we c-c-caught you!"

As a matter of fact the girls did look as if they were caught and for a few minutes were plainly confused.

"What are you girls doing?" I asked, though in truth I had guessed, having always held their indifference to be assumed.

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For a moment Polly hesitated and then decided to make a clean breast of the matter.

"We are arranging our dresses for the ball," she said, rather pettishly. "We are not children and cannot go robed in baby dresses such as Mrs. Mummer has designed for you and Peggy."

Now as a matter of fact Betty was scarce older than I, but I let the matter pass without comment.

"And what is that?" I asked, indicating the doll.

"'T is a *mannequin* from the mantua-maker's. She gets them straight from Paris to show the styles. I only have it on the promise to return it on next market day."

"And do you mean to go like that?" I gasped, for truth to tell, the doll was dressed wonderful elaborate.

"'T is entirely suitable," snapped Polly. "You would not have us shame father by going fitted out like serving wenches, would you?"

"'T is scarce as simple as Brother John suggested," I urged.

"Cousin John is naught but a man," Polly smirked, in a most patronizing way. "He means well enough, I suppose, but he lacks judgment in

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these matters. I know what father would wish."

"But Polly," I protested, "you cannot make such a modish dress. You will spoil the material."

"That 's what 's troubling us," exclaimed Betty before Polly could speak. "We know not where to begin. We never made a whole dress before."

"Let me call Mrs. Mummer?" I begged, aghast at the folly that could think of cutting into that rich silk.

"Nay, now," retorted Polly positively, "I don't want Dame Mummer meddling here. We'll manage somehow," and she took up the scissors.

"W-w-what w-w-will happen if you s-s-spoil it?" asked Peg with perfect calmness.

"I wish you would go away, child," grumbled Polly fretfully. "I vow you give me the vapors. I had quite planned out what I was to do and now I have clean forgot what came first."

"Polly, dear," I said earnestly, "'t is no easy task that you have before you. And do you think you can have the dresses done in time without aid? Why not engage a couple of sewing women to help you, if you will have none of Mrs. Mummer?"

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"Now that's not such a bad thought, Bee," Polly answered with a gracious smile. "If I but knew where to seek them."

"Mrs. Mummer could tell you," I suggested.

"Nay, we will manage without Mrs. Mummer, if we have to spoil the goods," answered Polly stubbornly.

"You should be ashamed to talk like that," I protested. "Mrs. Mummer is kindness itself."

"Oh, 't is all very well for children like you and Peg to have some one to pet you," returned Polly indulgently, "but I do not need a governess to tell me to point my toes and use my handkerchief."

"She's afraid, Mrs. M-m-mummer w-will tell C-c-cousin Jack," Peg said astutely.

"Nothing of the sort," Polly insisted, elevating her nose. "I tell you Cousin John is but a man without judgment in these matters."

"Aye," agreed Peg, "he's a m-m-man—but s-s-so is f-f-father."

There was naught further to be said and we left them to do as they willed. Polly persisted in her intention of getting along without Mrs. Mummer but I was glad to learn that she had

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secured two sewing women to help make up the dresses. Much to Peg's disgust the little *mannequin* whom she would have liked to add to her family of dolls went back to town in the pannier-baskets of the market-woman.

At last the great day came. Mrs. Mummer insisted that Peg and I should lie down before she began our toilettes, saying that we were unused to late hours and would be wise to nap if we could.

We hardly thought sleep possible but it was pleasant in the darkened room, and we lay upon the bed talking quietly of the fun in store for us. Peg had dozed off and I was beginning to feel drowsy when the door opened noisily and Polly came in.

In her hand was a hot curling-iron which she tested with a moist finger as she entered.

"This iron is perfect, Bee," she exclaimed, "can you give me a bit of paper? I have none in my room."

"'Tis m-m-much too h-h-hot. I hear it s-s-siz-siz-sizzle," said Peg, broad awake on the instant.

I jumped from my bed and looked hastily

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around the room, but it had been cleaned that morning and I found nothing.

"I'm sorry, Polly," I remarked, "there is none here."

"What 's this?" she inquired, advancing to the dressing-table and pointing to the silvered paper that had been used to wrap the bundle of bank notes and still lay safe under my bottle of lavender water.

"Oh," I protested, "that fine paper I 'm saving to ornament Peg's dolls. Don't take it."

"Peg will divide with me, won't you, dear?" said Polly in the pleasant voice she used when she wanted to wheedle. "A small piece will do me." Again she tested the curling-iron hastily. "Please, Peg. These will be cold soon and it is so difficult to heat them properly."

"If you will only t-t-take a s-s-small p-piece," Peg consented, for she was a generous little soul.

Polly, being in a hurry, and fearing, doubtless, that I would enter another protest, tore the paper fairly in half.

"I wonder, will the silver come off?" she murmured, as she looked at it for a moment. "I 'll turn that side out in case."

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She stood before the glass and curled her hair to her satisfaction, chattering all the while, so that it was plain that she was excited about the ball, though when taxed with it she pretended indifference.

"Would you and Peg like to use it?" she asked graciously at last, holding out the iron.

"Nay, my hair does n't need help and I like Peg's better in a state of nature," I answered, laughing, while the child beside me giggled audibly.

Polly shrugged her shoulders.

"Tastes vary," she said, indifferently. "Betty maintains that naught gives so fine a wave as red flannel. Her head at present looks like a geranium bed."

As she talked she took off the silver paper most carefully.

"I vow, child," she remarked, as she looked at its silvery surface. "I've not hurt your precious paper. The metal is as good as ever and you can make many a broach and necklace out of it for your dolls. I'll e'en put it back under the bottle with the other piece."

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Suiting the action to the word she tripped from the room and Peg and I resumed our interrupted nap.

CHAPTER X

I MEET AN OLD ENEMY

IT is scarce possible to exaggerate the excitement little Peggy and I felt as we dressed for our first ball, and Mrs. Mummer was no whit less stirred. She fussed and fumed over this and that, sending Clarinda back and forth till I should have thought the poor girl would have dropped from fatigue. But finally we were done to her satisfaction, even to the last rebellious lock on Peg's round head, and she stood off from us with a smile of pleasure on her dear, good face. Certainly no mother could have taken more pride in us than did Mrs. Mummer, who was ever ready to work her fingers to the bone for our pleasure.

"Now if there's a prettier pair at the ball I'd like to see them," she cried, bristling a little as if she waited for some one to take up her challenge. "Mr. John was right not to have you

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too fancy. You could not be improved upon."

"W-w-wait till you s-s-see Polly and B-betty," said Peg, "y-y-you 'll have no eyes for u-us."

Mrs. Mummer tossed her head, showing her indifference to the charms of those two young ladies, and turned to my dressing-table.

"Gracious me," she exclaimed, "you've forgot the lucky sixpence." And she held up the broken coin suspended from its long chain of fine gold.

That I had forgotten it for even a moment showed how much the prospect of the ball was in my thoughts, for that broken sixpence was very precious to me, it having been the means of keeping Denewood from being burned over our heads not so very long before. So for that, and other reasons, I treasured it above all my possessions. There had been a time when Admiral Lord Richard Howe, a fine courteous gentleman, had held one half, but his piece had been returned to me and since then both halves had hung about my neck.

"'T is the luckiest bit of silver in the world," Mrs. Mummer protested, as she held open the chain to slip it over my head, having a care not to muss my hair. "I feel we are all safe while

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you wear it; for though it is your sixpence, you yourself, Miss Bee, are the luck of this house, and in these times when all is war and confusion, 't is good to have a proved talisman. There are some who laugh and call such things superstitions, but 't is little I care what name they give it so long as fortune hops our way."

In all this I agreed with Mrs. Mummer, and though I am not one to believe in signs and such like, as so many in all classes are wont to do, yet my sixpence had proved lucky more than once, and I could not but feel that whoever wore it would be safe from harm.

The chariot was at the door and we stood about the hall waiting for Polly and Betty to appear, for, as was to be expected, they were late. After repeated summonings, they at last came rushing down the broad staircase.

"Gude save us!" exclaimed Mrs. Mummer, holding up her hands in consternation, as she saw them, and truly they were wonderful to behold.

In England, but two years before, I had seen my grandmother and my great-aunt, Lady Harborough, with many other fine ladies who came to the Dower House; but though the girls wore

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as rich silks, made after a modish fashion, there was something about their magnificence that seemed out of place and laughable. Peg and I had looked a little enviously at their splendid attire spread out upon their beds; but now that they were dressed I would not have exchanged our mul-muls for their flowered taffetas.

They were pretty girls, but the story of the jackdaw and the peacock came into my mind as I looked at them, and Mrs. Mummer had some such thoughts, for she murmured under her breath, "Mummer says, 'Fine feathers make fine birds,'" and then, aloud, "Well as I said before, the two prettiest ladies at the ball will go from this house."

"Now that is most polite, Mrs. Mummer," said Polly, preening herself, and taking the compliment as her due, "and yet you would have sent us dressed in country style an you had had your way."

"Aye, that I would," declared Mrs. Mummer with a snort. "I would have had you looking like modest maidens and not with curiosity shops upon your heads. But Master John will know that well enough to hold me blameless.*"

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Indeed their heads were the most wonderful part of their make-up, for the hair was carried up so high that it looked like a snowy mountain, with the powder dusted upon it. Gay colored feathers and butterflies of spun glass were tucked here and there and the whole arrangement was most fantastic, though 't was modish enough, as I well knew.

Seeing that she had mistaken Mrs. Mummer's meaning, and taken a compliment not meant for her, Polly tossed her head haughtily.

"Cousin John will see nothing in us to blame," she retorted.

"D-d-do that again!" cried Peg, excitedly, staring with wide eyes. "You l-l-look just l-like S-s-sukey when s-she carries in the w-w-wash on her h-h-head."

Amid the laugh that followed we went out to the chariot and Mrs. Mummer saw us stowed therein, pulling down our dresses and smoothing us out while she cautioned us not to fidget.

"I want you to look fresh when you get there," she said. "An you love me, Peggy, do not wiggle."

Fitting Polly and Betty into the carriage was

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a more difficult problem and Mrs. Mummer took no pains to be patient with them.

"Good luck, Miss Polly!" she exclaimed when that young lady was finally seated, "had your head-dress been a hand's breadth higher you needs must have sat upon the floor of the chariot. Didst measure it before you built up your pompons?"

"'T would not have been the first time a lady has done that," snapped Polly, and a minute later we were off, Mrs. Mummer's last caution to Peggy not to wiggle echoing in our ears.

When we drew up finally at the City Tavern where the ball was to be held, Brother John was there to meet us and, though I saw his eyes widen and his lips twitch as if he wanted mightily to laugh when he caught sight of Polly and Betty, he made no comment. Peggy greeted him with the triumphant avowal that she had never "w-w-wiggled a w-w-wiggle," and we proceeded to the great Masonic Hall in Lodge Alley, which was already filled with the ladies and gentlemen of the city.

Brother John took us to Mrs. Bache, the daughter of my friend, Doctor Franklin, and a

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most kindly lady she proved to be. In a minute we were seated about her and soon my first embarrassment had worn off and I could look around me with interest.

It was a mighty curious situation, for at a glance one could tell the patriot ladies from those who had consorted with the British. These latter wore much richer clothes; paduasoy, brocades, lutestrings and India brocades shone out in contrast to the dimities and muslins of the Whiggish ladies. Nor did the difference stop there, for Polly and Betty with their tall head-dresses were not alone in that fashion. All the Tories had their hair so arranged, and Margaret Shippen who sat gossiping with Betty Franks had her pompons built up to a full eighteen inches and, though it did seem monstrous, she carried it well and was, I think, the prettiest lady there.

The music began, and the embarrassment of the Tories was complete. The gentlemen present, being of very honest opinions, had no mind to flatter those who had flattered their enemies and the finely dressed ladies stood unasked and neglected. I saw Polly and Betty as

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I passed them in the dance. They were seated against the wall, Polly with a face very red and angry, and poor Betty with tears in her eyes.

I could not help but feel sorry for them and begged John to find them partners.

"There are many gentlemen who wish to dance," I urged. "'Tis ungenerous to treat guests so. If you did not want them to come why did you extend the invitation? Would you act thus if they were visitors at Denewood?"

"You're right, Bee," John agreed, "they are our guests," and when that first dance was ended he called together some of the officers, and a little later it was announced that all gentlemen and ladies who were without partners would be supplied by lot, as of course the majority were strangers to each other and must agree to dispense with the usual formalities. This at least was the reason given out; but, privately, it was whispered that most of the gentlemen refused to ask the Mischianza ladies personally, though they were willing to dance with those so chosen. 'Twas most humiliating and there was a fine tossing of great head-dresses, but they consented to be led out, nevertheless. Thereafter all

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danced, but I was glad indeed that I had not been one of those to be so slighted.

Of the men the French officers, in whose honor the ball was partly given, were very brave in their attire. They were beautifully dressed and glittered with orders. M. de Fleury, who danced more than once with little Peg, was attired in a wonderful white uniform trimmed with gold, and sure there never was a prettier picture than when those two saluted each other in the dance.

But another spot of color which I noted here and there among that gay throng pleased me not at all. 'T was the scarlet uniform of two or three British officers who flitted about saying flattering things to the Tory ladies and seeming as much at home among us as though there was no war between England and the United States of America, as we Whigs delighted to call the Colonies.

"What's the meaning of it?" I asked Brother John, who was never far from my side that night, though to be sure he led out others now and again, it being a fixed rule to dance but two dances in succession with the same partner.

"They are some of the slow boys we captured

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ere they could follow Clinton out of the city," he explained. "They are prisoners on parole and 't was thought by the committee to be genteel to invite them. There 's one special friend of yours in the city whom I expected to see."

"And who is that?" I asked, having no suspicion of whom he spoke.

"Captain Blundell. He and his friend Frederick Varnum delayed too long," he answered. "Do not grow pale, little sister," he went on anxiously, for the name of Blundell sent a fear to my heart that was like a knife thrust, "he 's harmless now, be sure of that, he 's had his fill of war. 'T was thought he was glad enough to be captured and made but a show of trying to get away."

"Oh, brother," I said, "any one but Blundell! I have a horror of the man." For he it was who, when quartered on us at Denewood, had made my life a burden and at the end near succeeded in his threat to burn the mansion over our heads.

"Nay, Bee, dear," Brother John replied, with a confident little laugh, "his sting is drawn, and though with an army behind him he might be

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venomous enough, I grant you, he'll sing small now that he's a prisoner."

"Well," I said, as John got up to leave me for a time, "I hope Blundell comes not near me; for though, as you say, the 'British officers are our guests 't will be more than I can manage to treat him civilly."

"'T is probable that he will not be here at all," answered Brother John, and went off with a bow to me and a promise to return ere long when he had done his duties to Miss Chew.

Doubtless it was on account of Brother John that I had so many partners that night, for he was so well thought of in and about Philadelphia and so devoted a patriot that any relation of his must share his popularity. However it was, I had hardly a moment to myself and many of the finest and most prominent men there had a kind word for me. Doctor Rush and Mr. Richard Peters who had known me since the days of my arrival in America told me the latest news of Doctor Franklin who was then in France. The French gentlemen too, were vastly polite and I heard one of them assure Mrs. Bache, in all

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seriousness, that her father was the most popular man in France.

Peggy had the pick of many partners and there was hardly a moment when there were not two or three begging dances of her. The French officers in particular, seemed struck by her little stammer, though they were more polite than we and never showed a smile, no matter how queer and funny her answers sounded.

It was near the end of the ball before he appeared and I had had time to forget all about Blundell, when I was startled by the sound of a voice behind me.

"I trust Mistress Travers will remember me," it said, and I turned to see him whom I most dreaded.

I curtseyed, for I could do no less, but I said no word, hoping that he might take himself off. In this I was disappointed.

"Won't you sit down a moment?" he asked with a most deferential and pleading air. "Surely you, of all ladies, will not slight a poor prisoner who wishes to beg that you think less hardly of him?"

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I was perforce bound to comply with his request but still I held my tongue.

"I had hoped," he went on, as soon as we were seated, "that you would have forgiven me for the part I played in your affairs."

"Think you I could ever forgive one who tried to destroy Denewood?" I burst out, for I knew that the man was a hypocrite.

"Nay, Mistress Travers," he answered, with a gesture of the hand as if to wipe out the past, "that was but an incident of war. Believe me, I am as glad as you that circumstances intervened in time to countermand my positive orders."

"'T is useless to discuss it," I answered, for I was sure to lose my temper over the matter if it were further dwelt upon and I had no wish to give him an opportunity to say slurring things of my manners.

He talked further of the ball, of Philadelphia, of many things, trying, as I could see, to make me feel more friendly toward him, but I answered only "Yes," or "No," as the case required.

"I see you do not mean to let bygones be bygones," he said at length, rather roughly, as if he had lost his patience. "No doubt a prisoner

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of war has little to offer in the way of favors, but let me warn you, Miss, that I shall not always be a prisoner and the time may come when you would rather have me for a friend than an enemy."

He paused a moment as if awaiting a reply, and then, with a low bow, took himself off just as John came back.

"Has the man been bothering you?" he asked.

"Nay, not by what he said," I answered. "'T is only that I fear him and would be happier to know he was in England for good."

John liked not Blundell any more than I did, but there was naught to be done but laugh and think of something else.

While we were talking one of General Arnold's aides came up to John and, with a bow to me, handed him a folded letter.

I watched him as he opened it and knew at once that it pleased him, for a happy light came into his eyes, though his face was grave enough.

He folded the note having read to the end, and, putting it inside his coat, rose to his feet.

"Come, Bee, I have something to tell you," and I, with a little anxiety in my heart went with him

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to a small room filled with flowering plants and ferns where we were alone together.

"I'm ordered back to my company, Bee," he said, when we were seated. "'T is the best news I've had for many a day, for I'm fair sick of trotting about on civil business at the beck and call of Arnold and his staff."

"When do you go?" I asked, hoping I would have him with me for some days more at least.

"At once," he answered. "McLane has sent for me to come post haste. There is something afoot."

"You go to-night, brother!" I exclaimed in astonishment.

"As soon as I've said 'good night' to my little sister Bee," he answered with a smile meant to hearten me.

"I know not what I shall do with anxiety for fear you will be killed," I declared.

"Nay, I shall not be killed," he protested.

"Oh, do not say that!" I cried. "'T is boasting, and that's unlucky. You must touch wood three times. Please, brother."

He did as I bade him, though with a laugh. "Sure I hope 't will be a good charm against dan-

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ger," he said, and as he spoke my hand went to my throat where hung the lucky sixpence.

Without loss of time I drew it forth.

"You must take it with you," I said, handing him the gold chain on the end of which the halves of the coin clicked together. "'T is a very lucky sixpence, brother, as you know, and if you have it about your neck I shall feel easier."

He took it in his hand thoughtfully, looking at it for a long time before he spoke. Then he unlatched the chain, taking off one of the pieces and handed the other, with the chain, back to me.

"You must share the charm, Bee," he said earnestly. "If it will keep harm from the wearer, 't will give me more comfort to know you are safe."

"Very well," I agreed, "but you must take the piece on the chain. Come, let me put it over your head and you can slip it beneath your cravat. My piece I can find a ribbon for when I go home, but you would never think to buy a chain."

"I fear I would n't," he answered, bending down, and I put his half of the sixpence about his neck and he thrust it out of sight.

"Promise you will always wear it," I begged.

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"I promise," he answered. And, whether he had faith in the little coin or not, I knew that for my sake he would keep his word, no matter what befell.

"Do you remember what Admiral Howe said when he gave you back the pieces of sixpence?" John asked with a smile.

"When they are again parted, two shall be made one," I quoted.

"Yes," he answered, "that was it."

"Well, I know not what it means, nor do I care," I went on, "so long as you are safe and—brother!" I exclaimed eagerly, another idea coming to me, "will Mark Powell be in your company?"

"Yes, I have arranged that," he answered.

"Will you give him a message for me? He's my substitute, you know."

"Aye," he said readily.

"Promise?" I insisted, and he nodded agreement. "Then you are to tell Mark," I continued, "that no matter what comes, no matter what may happen, whether in battle or not, he is my substitute and I order him to look after you and see that you come to no harm."

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"I shall tell him nothing of the sort," John laughed.

"But you promised," I insisted.

"Bee—" he exclaimed, more earnestly, "you will not hold me to it! You would not have me take such a message to one of my men."

I saw that being brave and a leader he could n't take my message to Mark Powell with a good grace.

"I release you from that promise," I answered with a sigh, "but if I were there instead of my substitute, it is what I should do."

"I must go now," he said rising, and I threw my arms about him.

"Good-by, little sister," he said, kissing me; "I leave you mistress of Denewood and can trust the care of it to you, as I have before."

"Good-by, brother, and God keep you," I murmured, and a moment later he had gone.

Happily for me the ball was near an end and I was not forced for long to keep a smiling face while my heart was heavy.

At last all the good-bys were said. Polly, Betty, Peg and I were to drive back to German-town that night and as I went down the steps to

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enter the chariot I saw, standing on the sidewalk under a street lanthorn, Captain Blundell and another beside him with his back to me. Though he was not dressed as when I had last seen him I knew the figure the instant my eyes lighted upon it, it was so long and excessively thin it could be no other than old Schmuck, the magus

CHAPTER XI

NEWS FROM ENGLAND

THE sight of Blundell and Schmuck brought a chill to my heart, and I had scarce a word to say on our way back to Denewood from the ball.

"Why are you so gloomy?" asked Polly as we rode on.

"Brother John is going to the front," I answered, thinking that a sufficient explanation for my lack of gaiety.

"Oh, is he?" said Polly indifferently.

"B-bee, dear, I 'm s-s-so s-s-sorry," cried Peg, reaching up and patting my cheek with her soft little hand; and, for the time being, I was comforted.

We all slept late the next morning, but when I woke my thoughts turned instantly to the two men and I began again to wonder what they

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could have to say to each other. I wished Brother John had not been forced to go away just then; for, though I saw no way in which either of these men could injure us, yet I could not shake the fear of them from my mind.

It was a gossipy breakfast we had. Polly and Betty regaling us with chatter of the ball and making light of the affront put upon the Mischianza ladies by insisting that the Colonial officers knew no better but would learn. Peggy stuttered volubly in their defense, but I could not bring myself to care very much what Polly and Betty might say and so was silent.

After breakfast, on going to straighten up my room, I noticed the silver paper lying under my bottle of lavender-water and seeing the piece Polly had torn off I thought what a pity it was she could not have been more patient and taken some other bit of paper for her purpose. I picked up the strip intending to smooth out a crease or two that the curling irons had made and, turning the silvered side down in order to avoid injury to the shining metal, my eyes were attracted by many faint lines drawn on the white surface.

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In amazement I examined it closely, remembering how John and Bart and I had searched it and found its surface blank. Yet here was a map, rough enough it is true, but still an understandable chart with names and figures carefully set down where before there had been nothing. I could scarce believe my eyes.

I sat with it in my hands too astonished to do aught but look and look, for how could the matter be explained?

Upon studying it further, it at once became



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plain that I had as yet only a portion of the map, the rest evidently being upon the other bit of paper. I rose and hurried to the bureau in a fever of excitement to fit the torn edges together.

But the other half was blank and though the rent edges matched there were no lines to complete the picture.

I puzzled my brains for an explanation. Could some one have drawn the lines there after the sheet was torn in two? But it was impossible to believe that so careful a drawing would have been put upon a torn piece of paper. Moreover, the lines ran in such a way that it seemed clear that they must be completed on the other half. I was convinced that the map had been torn, but that the other part fitting the tear had no lines upon it was a mystery for which I could find no solution.

It seemed more than probable, however, that I had at last come upon the paper which the magus had wanted and had gone to such lengths in his effort to obtain, and I decided to hand it to John at the first opportunity. To which end I put it beneath a pile of tuckers in my clothes-press where it was less likely to be blown away.

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I had scarcely concealed it when Clarinda came running into my room.

"Miss Bee! Miss Bee!" she cried, her eyes wide open and showing much of the whites. "Mrs. Mummer says you-all is to come right off. There's been a robber done got into Master John's room and the place looks worse than yours did a while back. Come on, Miss Bee, 'cause certainly somethin' am queer."

I hurried with her to John's room and found it quite as much in confusion as Clarinda had suggested. The presses, drawers and bookshelves had been emptied and their contents lay scattered on the floor. Chairs were upturned, the bed was pulled apart, rugs had been piled in a corner; it was clear at a glance that some one had been hunting for something with the same thoroughness that had been shown when my room had, in a like manner, been ransacked.

That this outrage could be the work of an ordinary thief was out of the question for, as had been the case in my room, an examination showed that nothing had been stolen and confirmed my belief that the drawing was the object of these strange visitations.

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At first the matter seemed plain enough. Schmuck was still looking for his map and having failed to find it in my possession had, not unnaturally, come to the conclusion that I had given it to John.

And yet this explanation was far from satisfactory, for when my room had been ransacked the silvered paper was in plain sight and may even have been in the hands of the searcher. Could it be that there was still another map? I puzzled over it but found no reasonable answer to the riddle.

Then another thought came into my mind to plague me. Could Blundell, whom I had seen talking to the magus, have aught to do with the matter? I feared Blundell more than any one on earth and it was with a sigh of relief that I dismissed this idea. Hans Kalbfleisch had said nothing of this British officer and I could not reasonably connect him with this affair. It was only my nervousness where he was concerned that had suggested such a possibility.

After Mrs. Mummer and I had put Brother John's room to rights I went back to my chamber and took out the map, viewing it with even

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more interest than I had before. With such a search going on it was clear that it was of importance and that if I wished to keep it until John came I must find a safer place for it.

I puzzled a little as to just where I should hide it but, after some thought, I decided to put it inside the silk embroidered cover of my book of maxims. Once before I had secreted a paper there and carried it through many dangers.

I cut the stitches holding the cover, and slipped the silvered paper inside, taking a last glance at the map to be sure that it was really there and that I had not been dreaming. Then, smoothing all out nicely I took a needle and thread and fastened the cover as it had been before.

"I shall tell Brother John about it the first chance I have," I said to myself, as I put the little book away.

But more than a year went by before I saw John again, the months passing quickly without many events of importance to mark them in my memory.

I had written to Mark Powell begging him to have a care, when possible, for Brother John's

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safety, although what I expected him to do I cannot say. But I received a letter in reply in which he pledged himself to do all in his power. It was a well written letter and the honesty of its purpose was so apparent that I took great comfort out of the thought that John had one so loyal and attached near his person.

The war which had been so near to us heretofore was now far away and though news of it came by express from New York it might as well have been in China, so peaceful and quiet were we. In Philadelphia indeed all was gaiety.

"Scarce would you know the British had gone," said Betty. "Mrs. Pemberton's chariot that did for Sir William Howe is not grand enough for General Arnold. He hath a coach and four, with servants in livery.

"And he hath bought the Mount Pleasant property on the Schuylkill for Miss Shippen," put in Polly.

"She's Madame Arnold now," said I, "but tell me, is General Arnold so rich that he can afford such extravagancies?" for our officers usually stinted themselves for the cause.

Polly shrugged. "He'll need to be. Peggy

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Shippen's father is forever complaining that his fashionable daughters have ruined him. They say his family costs him five thousand pounds English a year."

In truth General Arnold was too Toryish in his tastes and ways for my Whig ideas, but Peggy changed the subject by saying gravely:

"I h-h-hope my f-f-father's f-f-fashionable daughters are not the r-r-ruin of h-him."

I do not like to dwell much upon this theme; for, though I care naught for Arnold and think he richly deserved all the trouble and misery that later came to him, my heart is sore for poor Margaret Shippen whom he married that spring and who was dragged with him through the disgrace that came with her husband's treachery. I have seen few in my life who could compare in beauty with Peggy Shippen, as she was called in Philadelphia, so when I hear aught of Benedict Arnold I cannot help thinking first of Madame Arnold who, poor lady, suffered so grievously through no fault of her own.

In January I had an opportunity of renewing my acquaintance with his Excellency, General Washington, who was in Philadelphia to attend

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a banquet given to celebrate the alliance with France. We heard news of it, and it must have been a most splendid affair, for thirteen toasts were drunk, one for each state, accompanied by salutes of artillery.

It was at this time that General Washington sat to Mr. Peale for the portrait which two or three years later was totally defaced by Tories who broke into the council chamber where it hung.

Madame Washington, too, was in Philadelphia and there was an entertainment given in her honor to which we all went under the care of Mrs. Bache.

When I made my curtsey to her, Lady Washington was pleased to say that the General had brought her word that the little mistress of Dene-wood was an accomplished housewife.

I blushed mightily at this compliment and was for the moment too embarrassed to speak, but Madame Washington said, "There, there, my dear," in so kindly a tone that I was set at my ease.

The Fourth of July, 1779, was celebrated on Monday the fifth. We went in the evening to

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see the fireworks, Polly and Betty in gay gowns made by Mrs. Ann Pearson in Second Street, which, being adorned with gauze at fifty dollars the yard, called forth some fine comments on elegant extravagance from little Peg.

We were promenading the City Square, the older girls in the lead, while Peggy and I followed with Mrs. Mummer.

"Save us!" I heard that good woman exclaim, and I looked up to see that Captain Blundell had joined the two ahead of us. It was nearly a year since I had met him and, believing that he had been exchanged and was again with the British army, I had given no thought to him for many a day.

Mrs. Mummer would have taken us home forthwith, having much the same dread of this man as I, but as long as he came not near me and we continued to keep the girls in sight, I could not see what harm he could do us, so we followed them and I noted that he made himself vastly agreeable to Polly.

On our way home I could not hold my tongue from curiosity, but needs must ask Polly what Blundell had found to talk about.

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She tossed her head but did not answer.

"I k-k-know," said Peg disdainfully, "'t was just s-s-silliness."

"Nay, now," Betty cut in, "for once you are mistaken. 'T was a most informing conversation."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed with a scornful laugh, intended to spur her on to reveal more.

"Yes, indeed!" cried Polly, nettled into speaking for herself. "Mr. Blundell is an antiquary. At his home in England he has a vast collection of books and maps and curios. He was telling me about them and asking if we had aught of the kind at Denewood."

"Just an excuse to come there and see you," giggled Betty.

"Well, he'll not come then," replied Polly, "for I told him we had no rarities, and the only maps I had ever seen were in the hands of John and Allan McLane. Then, too, he's been exchanged and leaves to-morrow."

"The man's a spy!" cried Mrs. Mummer, and I knew not whether to agree with her or to look for an explanation in that glimpse I had had of Blundell talking to old Schmuck, the magus.

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That summer saw two victories for our arms which I only recount because John figured in both of them. The British had sent expeditions into Connecticut, plundering and burning New Haven, East Haven, Fairfield and Norwalk. New London was to be the next victim, but the British force was recalled after our men under Mad Anthony Wayne attacked and took Stony Point.

General Wayne was wounded in the head and John, with one of the General's aides-de-camp, carried him on into the fight because they said, "Mad Anthony would never forgive those who carried him *away from a battle*."

The second victory was at Paulus Hook where John and Allan McLane were with Major Harry Lee of Virginia. They swam the canal and captured the fort ere the British could fire a single piece of artillery.

John told us about it himself when he returned at the end of the year's campaign to set some of his affairs in order.

"Both our young soldiers were blooded there and behaved with credit. Mark will make an officer when he's older, if he but gets over his

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present idea that he is a special providence appointed to guard me."

I laughed to myself at this, much pleased to learn that my substitute was attentive to his duty.

John now took out letters of marque and shipped crews on several of his trading vessels which were roughly outfitted as privateers. Captain Timmons appeared unexpectedly at this time, having but newly escaped from the British who had captured him when he had brought me to the Americas. He and I were the best of friends and I had a warm welcome for him and a thousand questions to ask of his adventures since we had last seen each other. It was Captain Timmons who had made a rebel of me; so I had a soft place in my heart for him.

Allan McLane having been promoted to a majority, John was a captain now and although I had hoped he would stay with us he insisted upon sharing the lot of his troop during that cold and snowy winter of 1780 which was almost as bad as Valley Forge had been.

But the winter passed, new campaigns were planned by both sides and the war seemed no nearer an end than before.

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At Denewood our affairs prospered and Munmer ceased to growl at the destruction wrought by the British, for all signs of it had been wiped out, even the new fences and buildings that had replaced those which had been burned having taken on a weather-beaten look and ceased to remind us of those unhappy days.

I had many plans for the future and was longing for the time to come when Brother John would be back for good. Now and then I would remember the magus and Blundell, but I neither saw or heard aught of them, though occasionally I recalled the map hidden in the cover of my little book of maxims where it had remained undisturbed all this time. I always told myself that I must show it to Brother John, but when he came I was so busy and his visits were so short, that I forgot till he was gone again.

In July, 1780, there came news that put all thought of such things out of my head for a long, long time and brought a change that altered my whole life.

I was astonished one morning as I came to the head of the stairs on my way to breakfast to see Brother John awaiting me in the great hall below.

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"Jack!" I exclaimed, for as I had grown older, the ceremonious "Brother John" had been dropped. He looked up and waved a hand to me.

"When did you arrive?" I went on, running down to greet him.

"I came last night," he answered gravely, taking my hands; "it was late and I would not have you wakened."

"Is aught wrong?" I asked, for plainly he was not himself, and lacked the happy, boyish manner I was used to. "Have we lost a battle?"

"Nay," he answered, and tried to smile in the old way, "we've driven Clinton back into New York and his quarters there are almost as close as were Howe's in Philadelphia. Nay, our army is well enough."

"Then come to breakfast," I said, taking his arm, "you must be hungry or you would n't look so doleful."

That brought a little laugh, though not a hearty one.

"Oh, disciple of Mrs. Mummer!" he cried, "if aught seems wrong with a man 't is but an empty stomach."

At the table he sat listlessly over his food, go-

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ing off now and then into a brown study and coming back to his surroundings with an effort so that I began truly to be worried, nor was I the only one who noted it.

"B-b-but, Cousin John, have the B-b-b-british taken your a-a-appetite?" inquired Peggy, pointing to the untouched food on his plate.

Instead of answering he pushed his chair from the table.

"Have you finished, Bee?" he asked, and then without waiting for an answer, went on, "I can't eat and that's a fact!"

"What is it, Jack?" I said, getting up and going to him.

"I know not how to tell you," he replied, "but they have sent for you from England. And—and I must let you go."

I looked at him in amazement, not taking in the full purport of his words.

"Come and lie down, Jack," I urged anxiously. "You must have a fever on you."

"Nay," he answered, almost roughly, "'t is the bitter truth I'm telling you. You must go back to England, and that at once."

CHAPTER XII

A RUDE WELCOME

“**A**ND now for the whole tale,” said Jack in a strained voice, seating himself again and drawing forth two letters, one of which he handed to me and I saw that it was writ in Granny’s neat hand. The other he opened and prepared to read.

“Before I begin,” he said, looking up from the page, “I must tell you that the letters came in under a flag of truce by the hand of a messenger sent to treat for an exchange of prisoners. His first inquiry was for a relative of Sir Horace Travers, and I did not speak up and claim the honor, as in truth I had forgotten all about Sir Horace—but when he went on to say that Mistress Beatrice Travers, sister to Sir Horace, was staying with the gentleman he sought, I pricked up my ears and went forward, little thinking what good luck it would have been had I been born deaf.”

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"But, Jack," I put in hastily, "I am not Sir Horace's sister. I am but a cousin."

"You are Sir Horace's sister now," answered John gravely. And then I remembered that Horrie was the heir to Sir Horace, who had been ill for years. The old man must have died and Horrie come into his inheritance at last,—and once this fact had gotten into my head, I understood all. Long ago when we were about to be parted, Granny and Hal to go to Aunt Prudence in Amsterdam and I to seek my fortune among the savages, Horrie had promised that when he came into his money he would have us all back again. So now I was sent for.

It was a little strange what small joy that thought brought me.

"Oh, Jack," was all I could say, "must I go?"

"Aye, Bee, that was the question I asked myself at once. 'Must she go?'—but listen to the letter. 'T is from your brother's man of business," and he read as follows:

JOHN TRAVERS, *Esquire*.

At Germantown, in the Colony of Pennsylvania.

Honored Sir:

I write to apprise you of the demise on the 3rd day of April, 1780, at Frobisham, in Kent, of Sir Horace

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Travers, Bart. His young cousin having succeeded to his title and estates, is most anxious that his sister should join him at the earliest possible moment and bids me say that by the time of her arrival his grandmother, who is appointed his guardian, and his younger brother will be there as well. It is his intention to provide his grandmother with a suitable home for the remainder of her life and to set aside a generous jointure for his sister so soon as he is of age to execute the deed.

He wishes to express to you his gratitude for the protection you have accorded to her and to say how glad he is to be able to relieve you of all further responsibility. It will increase his indebtedness if you will arrange for the young lady's passage on the first possible vessel, as he is anxious that the family should be reunited.

Yrs. respectfully,

JABEZ NORTH.

"Why did not the lad write to me himself?" asked John, as he folded the letter.

I gave a half laugh, although my heart was aching.

"He was afraid he would not spell it right, of course," I said. "Just look at the long words. But, oh, Jack! must I go?"

"What bad news is in your letter?" he demanded, putting my question aside.

"'T is from Granny," I answered, and opening it I read as follows:

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My Dearest Beatrice:

I am like a child let loose from irksome tasks. Sir Horace has had the grace to die at last and we are off for England to join Horrie. Glad am I to shake the dust of Amsterdam from off my shoes—only 't is too abominably clean to have dust and the people are so virtuous that one longs for a chance to find fault with something.

Your Aunt Prudence thinks 't is scarce decent to be in such haste to be gone; but for my part I shall not spend in exile one day more than I must. At my age, time is precious, so come to us soon, my sweet one, for my heart is sore for a sight of you. Your exile has been so much more dreadful than mine that were I not a selfish old woman I would have thought of naught else. Hurry then, to your devoted old

GRANNY.

Post Scriptum. Hal says he hopes you have learned the use of the bow and arrows from the Indians, and can teach him. My one fear is that you may have taken to the native fashion of painting your face, which I hear is three wide stripes on each cheek.

"Oh, how like Granny it is!" I exclaimed, at the end. "Poor, dear Granny with her foolish notions! though she does love me."

"And has your exile been so dreadful?" asked Jack, with a very serious face. "'T is true you have had some rough adventures for a little maid—but has it been so dreadful?"

"Nay, 't is not necessary to answer that," for

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this speech brought back my thoughts from Granny, where they had strayed for a moment.

"Tell me, Jack," I went on, "must I go?"

"I can see no help for it," he answered gloomily.

"And I can see no reason for it," I burst out.

"'T is true I love Granny and the boys, but when I was friendless you gave me a home, the best home a maid could have. 'T is not fair that the minute my fortune changes I should up and run away from you."

"I would not have you stay out of gratitude," he broke in.

"I know that, Jack," I answered, "and 't is because Denewood is my home, my real home, where all my love is, and to leave it would be like tearing up my heart by the roots. Say I need not go, and 't will be all right. I will write a nice, long letter to Granny, and when the war is over, we will go together and pay her a visit."

I was eager that he should agree to this, thinking little of the difficulties in the way of such a plan, but he shook his head.

"Go you must, Bee, though your going will take all the sunshine from Denewood," he answered. "I have talked with Madame Washing-

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ton about it, and she is strongly of the opinion that you should go."

"Then I thank her not!" I answered sharply, "and it seems to me that this is a matter between us, and one that Madame Washington can have little knowledge of."

"Nay, Bee," he returned gently, "'t is a matter for older heads than either of us possesses. There is more in it than appears on the surface, and 't is your future I must look out for rather than my present desires. 'T is for your sake, and 't is your position in the world that I must think of; for, remember, the sister of Sir Horace Travers is a great lady."

"I had liefer remain the sister of plain John Travers of Germantown!" I broke in.

"Ah, but Bee," he replied, "you are not my sister, and that makes all the difference."

We argued it a while longer, in fact I protested to the very last, but John was firm. Finally when 't was settled, little Peg, who had sat listening all the while, broke in upon our talk.

"W-w-who's to tell Mrs. M-m-m-mummer?" she asked, whereat Jack gave a low whistle.

"Not me!" he said, with shameless cowardice.

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Indeed it was a task to fright any one, and when at last the news was broke to her she knew not which to do the more, pity or blame me. As to Jack, she treated him, whom she idolized, with supreme contempt.

"Let her go," she would mutter darkly, "you 'll never be sorry but once—and that will be always, as Mummer says."

There was little time wasted on the preparations for my journey. The excuse for the hurry was the fact that Captain Timmons was in port with the privateer bark *Alert* and it was on her that my voyage was to be made. The captain had pressing matters to attend to in France, or, at least, that is what John said, but it may well be that, having once decided that I should go, he feared that with any delay he might change his mind; and, in truth, it was better that the parting should not be prolonged over weeks of anticipation.

Mrs. Mummer was in tears nearly all the time as the day of my departure approached, and indeed the parting from her was not the least of my heartaches. At first she was for going with me, but that I put a stop to because John would

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have been left alone; and so it was settled that Clarinda should accompany me.

Even Polly and Betty showed a most surprising and unexpected feeling in the matter. Little Peg, somewhat of a small Indian, was loth to display emotion at any time, so now she only clung to me and hugged me hard, saying convulsively, "You will come back, B-bee, I k-k-know you w-will." Then she ran away that I might not see her tears.

It was a compliment and a comfort to me to know that a friendless little maid had made a warm place in so many hearts, but it scarce eased the pain of parting.

All the men and boys and women about the place were on hand to drop a curtesy and wish me a "God speed" the morning of my going, and when I turned to take a last look at Dene-wood it seemed as if the flowers and trees and even the mansion itself regretted my going; but that, of course, was only my heavy heart that put a shade of sadness over all I looked at.

Brother John came aboard the *Alert* to see me comfortably settled and finally the moment for parting with him came.

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"Must I go?" I said, looking up at him, my eyes filled with tears.

"It breaks my heart to part with you, Bee," he answered, rather chokily, "but when the war is over—"

"Ah, the war!" I exclaimed wildly, "I had forgotten; and Jack, you may be killed and I far, far away from you."

"Nay, now, don't think such thoughts," he said, comforting me, though I knew his heart was as sore as mine. "Remember, I have the half of a lucky sixpence about my neck and that will protect me!"

"And you will always wear it?" I questioned anxiously.

"Always," he answered simply, and no oath could have been more binding, as I well knew.

"Can't you leave the war and come to England with me?" I urged. "Sure you have done enough."

"Bee! Bee!" he cried, "you would not ask me to desert the cause!"

"No, no," I sobbed, "I would not have you a coward an I could but oh, Jack! if aught happens to you—"

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"Nay, do not torture yourself with such thoughts," he answered. "Good-by, and God keep you!" and, with that, he kissed me and was gone. As for me, I fled to my cabin and we were well out of the Delaware before my sobbing ceased.

To me the voyage seemed long and most monotonous, though Captain Timmons said we made a fine trip of it. He was an old friend, and scarcely a day passed that I did not look up from my sewing to find him shaking his head and mumbling to himself that when he had brought me to America he had little thought to take me away again; and I would assure him that 't was not of my own free will that I was aboard his ship. Whereat he would give a hearty laugh and vow a privateer was not so very different from a pirate such as I once, in my ignorance, had called him.

But, as the days passed, and the sting of the parting became less acute, I began to think of those to whom I was going. Granny I knew would be the same; but four years is a long time in the life of a child, and I wondered would Hal

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and Horrie have changed greatly. They had been careless, fun-loving boys, and I, a hoyden; but as I looked back it seemed that the years had brought so many changes to me that I could scarce believe myself the same child. So I was by no means sure in my mind what they would be like and was somewhat curious about it, wishing the *Alert* would hurry a little.

Thus the days passed and one morning I awoke to find the boat riding on the smooth waters of the river Loire. Soon we passed the town of Saint-Nazaire, dropping anchor at last at Nantes.

We had counted on the French having cleared the channel of the English ships, and when we came to anchor Captain Timmons put on his best clothes and went ashore, while I was forced to stay content on the deck of the *Alert* watching the various craft and the strange people who manned them, and thinking how glad and gay I would be if we had dropped anchor in the Delaware instead.

About tea-time the captain came back.

"'T was not so easy a task as I had thought to find it," he announced at once. "It seems that England is too strong to be conquered on the sea,

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as they expected here; and commerce between the two countries is as dead as a herring. But there are still some honest smugglers at work and I have arranged that you are to go with one of them. Till he sails you must e'en be content."

Truth to tell I liked not this plan at all, but I had been put into Captain Timmons' hands and felt sure it was the best he could do.

It was some days before the smuggler's craft was ready and once or twice Clarinda and I were allowed to go on shore, where the black girl thought that all who did not understand her English must surely be deaf and shouted herself hoarse in her effort to make them hear.

The little town of Nantes was quaint and new to me, and we saw many strange and interesting sights. There were houses with joists and gables carved with all manner of grotesque faces; others whose every story jutted out over the one below till they looked like stairs set upside down. We visited the shrine of St. Sebastian where the pilgrims go to pray to be saved from the plague. But of all the places the market interested me the most. Here we found fat, red-faced farmers, pig-jobbers, poultry-dealers, vendors of earthen-

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ware and vegetables. More than half the people, buyers and sellers alike, were women who knitted constantly, plying their clicking needles as they bargained or gossiped and never missing a stitch no matter how hot the argument might wax. All were brown-faced, white-capped and wooden-shod; and save that the townspeople carried a great door key hung at the girdle, it was impossible to tell them from the country folk.

At length the day came when the French smuggler was to start, and all my effects were put aboard a small hooker named the *Clair de Lune*. She seemed safe enough, and, as a matter of fact, I was entirely comfortable while I was on her.

Just as we were leaving the *Alert* Captain Timmons took me to one side.

"I have two presents for you, Mistress Beatrice," he began. "They were left in my charge by Mr. Travers to be handed over when we parted."

One of the parcels was a purse containing a large sum of money, and the other was a small, leather-covered case. I opened it hastily and found a locket of gold; inside this was a miniature of Jack and a slip of paper upon which was writ-

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ten: "This, so you will not forget one who is ever thinking of you."

I gave a cry of joy! It was as if I heard John speak to me.

"'T is like him, is it not?" asked the captain, looking at the picture over my shoulder. "He had it done by Mr. Peale, the same that painted the portrait of his Excellency, General Washington. A bit flattered, I should say, but 't will do well enough."

"'T is not at all flattered!" I retorted indignantly, and then I caught the twinkle in the captain's eye and saw that he was but teasing me, and was amused that I had been taken in.

"Do not be too free with your money, lass," he said to me at parting. "'T is an honest smuggler you go with, but 't is safer in these foreign countries not to put temptation in the way of any one. Hide your gold and your locket where they will not be easily found. Your route will be by post from Rye, in the east of Sussex, where you are to land, to Frobisham, in Kent. 'T will take a long day and, though there are highwaymen about, those gentry ply their trade at night. Nevertheless, hide your money and—oh, yes, Mr. Travers

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bade me tell you he would send more from time to time."

"You have all my thanks for your kindness, Captain Timmons," I murmured, holding out my hand.

"Nay, Mistress Beatrice," he said, "I have done naught. But do not let us part until I have been told when I am to come for you again."

At that I burst into tears, for in saying farewell I seemed to be severing the last tie holding me to the country of my adoption, and my heart was heavy.

"I would that I knew when I might return," I sobbed, "but one thing you may promise an you will."

"Say on, and 't is done," he answered heartily.

"That you will come for me if aught happens to Brother John?" I went on. "Wait not to see how he fares. Even a little hurt might prove serious and 't will take so long to reach him," and at the thought my tears began to fall afresh.

"To be sure I 'll promise," said the captain hastily, and I think he would have undertaken anything to stay my tears.

And so I parted with the good captain in better

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spirits than I would have thought possible; for it seemed that I had made him a link between Jack and myself.

We were most civilly treated aboard the *Clair de Lune*, but their bearded faces and tasseled caps gave the French captain and his men a very sinister look to my unaccustomed eyes. The boat was not particularly clean but the food and wine were most excellent, indeed vastly superior to that with which we had been satisfied upon the *Alert*.

We were destined, because of contrary winds, to spend a longer time on the "*Clair*" as the men called her, than I had thought would be needful, and it was near a week before we sighted a shore early one evening which the captain told me was "Angleterre."

But even then we could not go direct, for there were suspicious-looking sails about, and the captain drove past Rye Bay as if it were nothing to us.

When night had fallen, we crept back slowly again, only to find a ship riding at anchor in the bay.

After a hurried consultation with his son, who acted as mate, the captain explained most politely

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and with many shrugs and expressions of regret, that he dared not run the risk of seizure, the English were more than usually watchful, so he and his son had come to the conclusion that it was best to put about and await a more favorable opportunity.

"And what is to be done with me?" I demanded, to which he replied that the same question had bothered him more than he could well express.

I protested that I did not wish to go back to France and that as I was not contraband and did not fear seizure, I saw no reason why he could not set Clarinda and me ashore with our boxes without any great risk to themselves.

The captain promised to take the matter under advisement and at length it was agreed that an attempt should be made to land me on the beach that very night.

"But why not during the day?" I protested, not liking the thought of being landed in a strange country in the darkness.

"'T is impossible," he answered, and though I knew not why it should be so, it was clear they would not consider my wishes on this point.

I was far from liking the prospect, but I wanted

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mightily to be on shore, and so I consented with as good a grace as I could.

It was a moonless night, though fairly clear, and Clarinda and I were put into a small boat after the *Clair* had been brought to, a mile or so off-shore. Every move was made with extreme quietness and the men spoke in whispers, giving the impression that we were upon some desperate venture, which I could not help thinking very absurd and French. I bade farewell to the captain, thanking him for his care of me, and a few moments later we were rowing silently away from the hooker.

Nothing appeared to stay our progress, and at length the line of white waves breaking gently upon the shore showed over our bow and we grounded softly.

The Frenchmen made short work of relieving themselves of their passengers, and in scarce more time than it takes to tell we were standing on the soft sand in the midst of our boxes unable to see ten yards in any direction, alone on a strange beach, where not a light showed and no sound came to us.

"Save us, Miss Bee, but I d'clare dis certainly

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am lonesome. Ah don't think tha 's a soul livin' in dis land," said Clarinda, but scarcely had she whispered the words than the harsh voice of a man smote our ears.

"Halt! Stand where you are!"

The command came from a point a little to my right.

" 'T will be a pleasure to shoot you an you come in my direction!" cried some one behind me.

"Or in mine!" shouted another.

"Or in mine!" cried a third, and in a moment other voices took up the words till it sounded as if a regiment was surrounding us.

Clarinda with a faint wail of fear dropped at my feet, and I, scarce less alarmed, stood rigid, awaiting—I knew not what.

It was as if we were hemmed in by ghosts, so noiseless had been the approach of those who spoke and, though we heard no footfall, due doubtless to the muffling sand, yet I seemed to feel our enemies closing in on us.

Suddenly the slide of a dark lanthorn was withdrawn and in its light a circle of hostile faces confronted us.

CHAPTER XIII

A COMPANY OF FINE GENTLEMEN

IT would be far from the truth to assert that I felt no alarm on that lonely sand-beach, the target for a score of unfriendly eyes. Nay, I was much frightened, and it seemed a long time that we remained thus, in a silence that was broken only by the harsh inbreathing of the man who held the lanthorn. Then some one spoke.

"Bash me!" he cried. "'T is naught but a wench!"

At this they crowded in close to us, talking and making game of the man who held the lanthorn whom, because he was dressed in a sort of a uniform, I judged to be the leader of the party.

"'T is a fine captain of the preventive men you are, Master Hodge," cried one. "To take us out of our beds to net a lass."

"An 't were a babby, you would 'a had out the melitia," said another, at which there was a roar of laughter.

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"Have done!" shouted Hodge, plainly put out by this badgering.

"Nay, 't is fair shiverin' I am, with fright 'gin the lass turns on us," a third put in, chattering his teeth in mock alarm.

"'T is a gallant man, this Hodge," exclaimed a fourth. "'Come on,' says he in a whisper, ' 't is a muckle of the smugglin' boys I 've warnin' of.' "

"And have we not the goods?" retorted Hodge. "What want ye? Do the boxes no speak for themselves?"

"Aye, boxes!" cried three or four together desisively. "But no casks nor hogsheads," said a new voice.

"Naught to wet our whistles," growled another.

"And running hither and yon on the sands is dry work," complained a third.

"But I 'm no smuggler," I objected, thinking it high time to put an end to this foolishness.

"Are ye no?" said Hodge. "Then what do ye here?"

"Belike she 's here to gather strawberries," some one answered for me, and at that there was a great laugh and I, too, could not help but smile.

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“ ’T will be on t’other side of thè face ye ’ll be laughin’,” growled Hodge at me, growing angry under the banter.

“ ’T will be better an you keep a civil tongue in your head,” warned one of the men, who so far had kept silent; but Hodge paid scant heed to him.

“What do ye here?” he repeated, addressing me threateningly.

“I have just landed and, knowing naught of the country, I shall thank you to tell me where I must go, and whom I can find to carry my boxes,” I answered. I liked not the man’s manner and saw that the joking of his companions was apt to react upon me. Moreover, I wanted to find shelter for the night and the means to go forward upon my journey.

“Fear not for your boxes,” Hodge answered, “such as *you* have given us a bad name on this coast and we mean to put a stop to your smuggling. The boxes will be carried right enough—and you too, an you make a fracas.”

My situation, albeit serious enough, had its amusing side, too. When I had left England I had been taken as a spy by the British in America.

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Now, after four years, I was returned only to be halted as a smuggler. Truly the British were a suspicious people. Yet there was more than a little evidence to confirm Master Hodge's suspicions and even I could not find it in my heart to blame him overmuch, so I thought it best to explain my position at once and make all plain.

"I am not a smuggler," I began quietly. "My brother is Sir Horace Travers, of Frobisham, in Kent, and I am on my way to him from across the seas."

But the greatness of my claim made the man skeptical.

"Oh, aye, no doubt," he sneered. "Natheless you'll come with me, my Lady Nobody of Nowhere and tell your tale to the Squire."

"I shall be glad to go," I agreed.

Hodge was evidently nonplused at my willingness to accompany him, but he shook his head stubbornly as if he had made up his mind to go through with the business, come what might.

The silent man who had warned him before, spoke again.

"She's no smuggler, Bill," he said, putting a hand on the other's arm.

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Hodge shook him off roughly.

"I'll believe that when she tells me that she did n't come by the *Clairy dee Loon*," he asserted; "am I to think she plumped down on the shingle out of the clouds?"

The other shrugged his shoulders not caring to shoulder the responsibility.

"Then mind a bit of advice, lad," he cautioned. "Speak the maid fair. A smooth tongue costs naught and may save you a rating. The gentry aye stand together, and, smuggler or no, she's gentry. You may lay to that!"

After which rather lengthy speech he spoke no further so long as he was with us. But his words seemed to have an appreciable effect upon Hodge who scratched his head perplexedly.

"'T is true I'm new at the game," he admitted, talking in an undertone, "but I've made prisoners, and up to the Squire they shall go, come what may."

This decision pleased me, for I felt sure the Squire would be a gentleman to whom I could explain the situation and who, I doubted not, would give me the information I sought as to the means of traveling into Kent. I was glad, therefore, to

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hear Hodge give orders to the others to take up the boxes, and forthwith we started off.

I gained little idea of the lay of the land as we stumbled up the beach, but we came upon a slight rise and a moment later entered a broad road. Down this we went some two or three hundred yards, halting at length before the entrance to a fine park, as I judged from the size of the lodge, though I could see little but the bulk of it for the darkness.

We were forced to awaken the keeper and there were more parleying and laughter, but we were let in and took our way up the long avenue towards lights that showed through the trees.

"Hurry on," Hodge urged. "I've no mind to knock up the Squire after he's abed."

"No danger of that," some one answered him. "Squire's not likely to be 'twixt sheets before 't is light, seein' he has company."

But Hodge was for pushing forward, and finally we came to the house which blazed with lights, a sure sign that there was no thought of bed within.

My captor started for the servants' entrance, but I stopped him at once.

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"The front door is there, is it not?" I asked, indicating the large entrance before us.

"Aye, but 't is for the gentry," he answered. "I dare not go that road."

"You may do as you please," I returned sharply, "but I go no other," and evading a hand he put out to stop me I ran up the steps.

Considering that I was his prisoner, Hodge was forced to follow, though he liked it not and stood awkwardly, looking very sheepish as the door was opened by a tall footman who regarded him with supercilious surprise.

"Nay, now, Rowlandson," Hodge began, but I cut him short and stepped forward with my chin in the air.

"This man has seen fit to interfere with my maidservant and myself, and I wish to see your master at once, that the matter may be made straight."

The footman drew back in evident surprise, but his manner was entirely respectful.

"I will speak to my master, madame," he said, throwing open the door of a little morning-room. "Will you be pleased to wait here," he added, and, as I entered with Clarinda after me, he stopped

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Hodge who would have followed persistently at our heels.

"'T is not for the likes of you," he said shortly.

"But she's my prisoner," insisted Hodge, who was a stubborn as well as a stupid man. "I must see that she does n't escape."

"I have no intention of escaping," I assured him composedly.

"And you, Hodge, must come with me and tell your tale to the Squire," said the footman.

Hodge still refused to let me out of his sight, but at last, after much arguing, he took up his stand at the door of the drawing-room opposite where I sat, so that he could talk to the Squire and at the same time make sure of me. It was because of this that I overheard all that followed. Rowlandson, meanwhile, had crossed the rather narrow hall and opened the door.

Instantly there came the sound of many voices all talking more or less at the same time. The speakers were men, and from their tones I knew they were excited and gay.

Now and then there was a lull followed by the rattle of dice and shouts of elation or dismay, protests against fortune and the like, which were

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repeated again and again as the game they played went on.

Rowlandson stood at the door waiting for his master to notice him, but seemingly no one paid the slightest heed to the tall footman.

Presently there was a louder shouting than usual and in the pause that followed one spoke whose voice I'd heard before but could not at the moment place.

"Egad, what luck!" he cried. "You've thrown nicks twice, Basil. Now my commission is all I have left, but that I'll keep. I'll back to the army in the Americas, for I know where there's gold that will make Billy Bluebones's hoard look like small coin. That I'm going after, and, once found, I will return and go a-courting Dame Hazard again."

"You have a gay way of romancing since you saw the Americas, George," spoke up the languid voice. "This Bluebones treasure was prodigious enough but, Od's life! think you we believe the whole coast is strewn with pirate gold?"

"Nay," said the voice I knew, "'t is not so easy come by; but I was on the track of it a year or two ago. When I came into my inheritance I

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gave over looking. Now that I'm ruined I shall have after it again, and this time I'll not give up. I know where to lay my hand on information that will lead me to the gold and when George Blundell makes up his mind in earnest he usually gets what he goes after."

I heard no more of the talk after that. Should I never be rid of this man? Was he to turn up in my path wherever I went? I had thought him still in America and lo, here he was near me! I could not repress a slight shiver of apprehension, though I called myself "a silly," seeing no reason why he should wish to harm me.

I was brought back to my surroundings by talk that concerned me.

"'T is Hodge from the village, sir," I heard Rowlandson saying.

"Hodge at this hour of the night?" repeated the voice which, I had learned, belonged to him they called Basil.

"Now know you not, Basil," said the languid drawl, "that the honest working folk insist upon beginning their day as we end ours? Most like good Hodge is but up a little earlier than customary."

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"A very unwholesome practice," laughed another.

But Basil, whom I guessed to be the Squire, paid scant attention to these banterings.

"Speak up, Hodge," he said sharply. "What brings you here?"

"'T is that I've taken prisoners, Squire," said Hodge, "and know not what to do with them. You see I'm but lately 'pointed to be helper to the preventive men."

"Oh, 't is business," cried a disgusted voice. "Oons, but there's naught brings sleep to my eyes so quickly."

"They're smugglers, an it please you, sir," Hodge went on; "they say they're not, o' course, but we've been on the lookout for 'em this week past."

"Parlez-vouses or our own men?" demanded the Squire in a business-like tone.

"Well, they're not—to—say parlee-voos nor not—to—say men, neither, exactly," said Hodge, with some hesitation.

"Zounds! This grows exciting," said he, with the drawl. "What strange beasts has the yokel captured?"

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"Nor not—to—say beasts, neither," went on Hodge, unmoved, "seein' that one of 'em is a lady and t'other her black woman."

"A petticoat!" cried several voices in chorus. "Have her in, Basil, have her in!"

"Now, what have you to do with a lady, Hodge?" demanded the Squire rather sternly. "And why have you brought her here?"

From his tone Hodge thought he was being unjustly badgered, where he had looked for naught but praise.

"I found her set down in the middle of the beach, sir, with a pile of boxes as high as your head. And if she's not a smuggler, what else is she and how came she there? That's what I want to know."

Hodge had found his tongue and was ready to enlarge upon the theme, but the Squire cut him short.

"This is what comes of engaging a farmer for his Majesty's revenue. 'Tis some stupid mistake, most certainly!" he exclaimed.

"Nay, I'll lay you two to one 't is no mistake," the languid voice cut in. "Half the fine ladies in London smuggle, an they get the chance. I'

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faith, 't is a regular business with the foreign ministers' wives, and I myself never come into the country without wearing as many suits as I can carry."

"But you don't have a pile of boxes set down on my beach in the dead of night," protested Basil.

"I never have yet," answered the other, "but the suggestion takes my fancy."

"'T is some enterprising milliner. She's bringing out of France the fashions, without which the ladies would have the megrims. Have her in, Basil, and let her off with a reprimand if 't is her first offense."

"I'll wager five guineas she's no mantua-maker," said the drawler.

"Done!" said another voice, and then I was called for.

With Clarinda behind me, I entered and as I stood upon the threshold I gazed upon a curious sight.

The floor was strewn with playing-cards; pack upon pack had been thrown down in the utmost confusion. One could not step without treading upon them. Around a great table lounged half a dozen young men, some of whom wore long frieze

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surtouts. Others had their coats inside out, and all wore great high-crowned and broad-brimmed, flower-decked straw hats, practical in that they shaded the wearers' eyes from the glare of the candles which burned everywhere about the room. Each had leathern guards on his arms to protect his expensive ruffles; and every man had beside him a wooden bowl for holding money. Some were smoking, although the practice seemed scarce so universal as at home.

For a moment I stood there in silence, my face shaded by my calash and veil. I was glad to find that Blundell did not recognize me, for he sat half turned away from me, looking gloomily at the wall. He was not in the uniform that I had always seen him wear, and I confessed to myself that he looked better in his silken dress than in the scarlet regimentals of a British officer.

"Which is the Squire?" I demanded, in the quiet that followed my appearance.

"I am he," said a very young man, rising reluctantly and giving me a short bow, "at your service, madame."

"I am just landed from the Americas," I began,

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trying to speak calmly, "and I wish to know where I can get a coach for Frobisham, in Kent."

For a moment there was silence, then one of the gentlemen spoke as if he had suddenly had a brilliant thought.

"From the Americas? Faith, an it is tobacco you have in your boxes I'll engage to dispose of it all, once you've made your peace with Mr. Sunderland here," and he indicated the Squire with the stem of a long pipe he smoked.

But I took no notice of him.

"Is it tobacco you have brought?" asked the Squire. "I warn you I am a magistrate and 't is my duty to go to the bottom of this matter."

"I have naught in my boxes but woman's gear," I answered quietly. Whereat there was a great nodding of heads among the men at the table.

"'T is a mantua-maker after all," said one.

"What I mean is that I have naught but my own clothes and belongings," I added hastily.

"'T is a monstrous pile of garments for one female," Hodge blurted out.

The gentlemen whispered among themselves, nudging each other and smiling, while the Squire

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looked at me with a frown upon his face. I felt almost guilty though I could not tell why.

"You see my position is a curious one—" I began, determined to tell my tale.

"Her position is a curious one," one of them mocked, as I paused. "'T is most romantical, I vow! Horrie Walpole would have loved it, had he been here."

At this there was another outburst of laughter and the Squire's frowns grew deeper, while I felt myself flushing and becoming more and more uncomfortable.

"It seems that I cannot make you understand," I began once more, "but I am sister to Sir Horace Travers, in Kent and—"

"Oh, then you are an English lady?" he returned suavely, though 't was plain he did not believe a word of what I said.

But of that I was not thinking at the moment, for the question hit straight upon my heart.

"I English?" I cried, throwing back my calash and veil. "I English? Indeed no! I am an American!"

CHAPTER XIV

POETRY AND PISTOLS

NOW as I threw back my calash every man in the room jumped to his feet as if he were a jack-in-the-box worked by springs, and Blundell was no slower than the rest.

"'Pon my soul!" he cried. "'T is Mistress Travers," and striding around the table he was at my side in an instant, bowing low.

"Gentlemen," he went on, addressing the room at large, "I gladly vouch for this lady and will go somewhat further to insure her honor," and he motioned toward his sword significantly. He was right gallant as he stood there, and I could scarce believe 't was the same Blundell who had acted so churlishly towards me in the past.

"Nay now, George, every man in the room would do as much, I warrant," said the Squire heartily. "Had Mistress Travers but removed her head-gear there had been no such pothor.

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Hodge!" he cried, turning to my captor. "Hodge, get out. You're naught but a fool," and that was the last I saw of this zealous leader of the preventive men.

"We do not need you to teach us manners, George," drawled one of the gentlemen languidly. "As Basil says, Miss Travers's bonnet was most deceptive; and coming here at night, as she did, with that dolt Hodge to tangle our wits, we were all under a misapprehension. I wagered she was no milliner, but that was because I knew of a woman who travels by this way with wigs and I was sure it was she."

At this even I laughed a little, and, in a moment more the formalities of the occasion were performed by Blundell, who acted throughout most courteously, although I could not shake off my distrust of him.

Indeed all these reckless young fellows were gentlemen, and the moment my identity was established they were ready to risk their lives in my defense should the need arise. And yet, an instant before, they had not had the consideration to get up from their chairs, believing I was but a shop-keeper and therefore beneath notice! I

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could not help thinking how different it was in America where 't was a matter of the strong helping the weak without regard to the rank or position in which they had been born. I could not picture to myself either John Travers or Allan McLane unconcernedly betting over a friendless female who had come to them for help. Still I could not find it in my heart to blame these gay young gentlemen, for 't was the way of the country in which they lived, and they were ready and gallant once the situation was made clear to them.

It was soon decided that it was not practicable for me to start for Kent that night, but Mr. Sunderland assured me he would have a post-chaise at my disposal in the morning.

"Until then, Miss Travers," he said, "I trust you will put up with such poor hospitality as my house affords. 'T is but a bachelor's roost, but my mother's housekeeper still lives here and is a decent old body who will give you the attention you require. I have sent for her and she will show you to your room where I trust you will rest comfortably."

Whereupon there appeared a gray-haired, motherly woman who took me under her pro-

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tection, and with a low curtesy to the gentlemen I left them to resume their play.

On the morrow the Squire, with Mr. Blundell and the housekeeper, were up to speed me on my journey, and thanking them as best I could for their kindness, I started for Frobisham.

My boxes were strapped behind, and while the postilion cracked his whip and shouted joyfully to his horses, I settled myself as comfortably as might be for the long drive to the Towers, which was the name of Horrie's place.

It was a pleasant road through a pretty country, but my prejudiced eyes could see little beauty anywhere. The trees were small, the roads rough and narrow, the streams could not compare with ours in America and the very sky was not so blue. Clarinda too, shared my feelings, for when I pointed out a fine, gently rolling landscape, she sniffed and tossed her head.

"'Deed, Miss Bee, I 'clare it don't take my eye nohow. I've been lookin', hard as I can, an' I ain't see a watermelon nor a sweet p'tater nowhere! 'T ain't nothin' like we all's used to."

It was easy to see that I was not the only homesick traveler in that chaise.

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We stopped at a little inn called the "Silver Tongs" and the landlord came out and escorted me into his hostelry with a vast deal of ceremony. Drawers and serving men stood about bowing profoundly and I was not a little puzzled, and in some wise put out, that so much pother should be made over me. I could not see why all this deference should be paid to a stranger in the country, but it was made plain when one of the maids dropped a hint about "the Squire's post-chaise," and I found out that I was traveling in that gentlemen's private vehicle and that Mr. Sunderland was a very rich young gentleman whose equipage was well known in those parts and who spent his money lavishly.

It was a graceful compliment the Squire had paid me in that he had concealed the fact as well as he could, and I tried to maintain his credit at the hostelry, though I do not hold with a reckless throwing away of money.

After about an hour's rest at the "Silver Tongs" we started on again, refreshed and ready for the four or five hours' journey that lay before us.

As we went on mile after mile, I began to grow

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drowsy, until at length my head dropped back on the cushion and I fell fast asleep.

I came to my senses with a start to find that the horses were at a standstill and there were sounds of parleying outside; but ere I could look to see what was toward, the door was opened violently and there before me stood a man dressed in the height of fashion, a cocked hat in his hand, which he swept to the ground with a flourish as he bowed to me. His face was masked by a black cloth with two holes through which I could see the gleam of his eyes.

"It desolates me beyond measure," he began in a gentle voice that was both musical and winning, "but I must request that you alight. 'T is most humbly I entreat your Ladyship, yet:

Necessity a naughty jade is.
But willy-nilly she obeyed is.

Ah, ha! canst cap that, Mistress? 'T is well thought of on the moment, and would not shame Master Robert himself, think you?"

I looked at the man in astonishment, knowing not what it all meant, though the mask and the request alike pointed only too plainly to one solution.

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"Nay, look not so cast down," went on the gay voice beside the door, "and pray you do not scorn my verses, Mistress, or I shall be the most wretched of highwaymen. Remember 't was but strung together on the instant; but, an it please you, we will drop into the more sordid business at hand; for, as Master Herrick might have written of me:

Thy zeal is so speedy
Has found a way,
By peep of day,
To feed and clothe the needy.

That, I warrant you, has the true ring; but come, your hand that I may set you safely on the ground."

"What is the meaning of this, sir?" I demanded, though I knew all the while that he was there to rob us and could see no way to stop him. But, instead of answering, he held out his hand and bowed again, inviting me to alight.

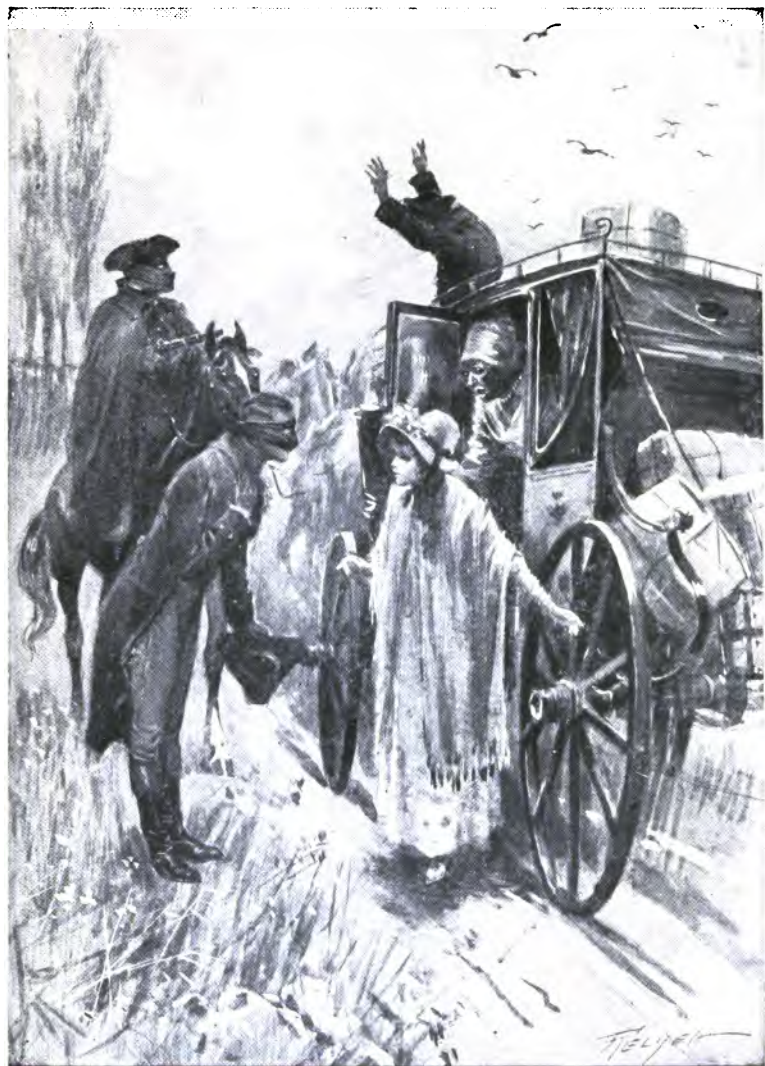
I stepped out of the carriage but touched him not, at which he feigned deep dejection.

"See, your Ladyship, how I am undone," he cried. "I vowed to ply my trade with courtesy and goodwill and I find 't is no more acceptable

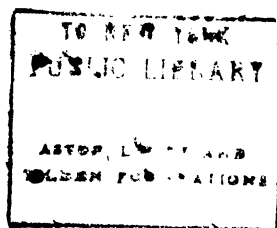
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than the coarse jests of Dick Turpin and his disciples."

But I paid scant heed to his chattering, being then intent to discover where the postboy was and why he permitted a single man, unarmed so far as I could tell, for he wore not even a sword, to halt us. But the moment I was out of the carriage the matter was plain enough. At our horses' heads, sitting on a great beast of his own, was another masked man holding two pistols in his hands and looking threateningly at the postboy who cowered before him. This second highwayman wore a huge wrap-rascal, his hat was pulled well down over his forehead, and his mask covered his face so completely, that not even his chin was visible. His demeanor was most threatening, but he said no word, leaving the weapons he held to speak for him. There was nothing to be gained from that sinister figure, and I turned to the other who still talked and quoted poetry in as light-hearted a way as though he were engaged in a joyful and honorable business. Never had I heard or seen such a man and I confess that though I was annoyed I felt no fear and was, on the whole, rather amused.



"See, your Ladyship, how I am undone," he cried



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Clarinda had been turned out of the carriage also and when she saw the forbidding figure at the head of the horses she gave a shriek and covered her face with her hands; but I brought her to her senses by assuring her that there was no danger if she did as she was told, at which she took courage and looked about.

"'Deed, Miss Bee," she whispered, "this here England am certainly a funny place! We ain't no more 'n touched the land when we all is took up for 'mugglers, whatever that am, and now these here thief gentlemens is come along and I 'clare, Miss Bee, I don't like this here country, nohow!"

Meanwhile our gentle highwayman was proceeding to search the carriage in a very business-like way and, though his voice was sweet and his hands cared for like those of a gentle, he seemed thoroughly familiar with his trade. Now and then he sang a snatch of a song or a bit of ballad while he tossed our belongings about in time to the music. At last he came to the purse given to me by Captain Timmons from Brother John and I thought we would be let go, now that he had found the money.

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He weighed it in his hand a moment or two, shook his head at it rather dolefully, and then jumped out of the carriage.

"A find, captain!" he called to the man on horseback, tossing up the purse and catching it again so that it jingled loudly, "a find! Dost hear it sing?"

To my great surprise he who sat upon the horse shook his head violently and though he spoke not, made it plain that the money must not be taken. The other pleaded and even started to go his own rout and keep the purse, but the horseman leveled a pistol at him menacingly and, with a laugh, he threw the money back into the post-chaise.

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may
Old Time is still a-flying—

"And 't is the same with gold," he broke off. "Od's life! There's little accounting for the whims of some. But to work, to work and have done with a crazy business!"

Of all their proceedings this was the strangest, for, having found what I thought they sought, one of them refused to take money. Here, then, was a new kind of highwayman to me and I

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watched curiously to see what was to be done.

I had not long to wait, for after a moment's further look about the inside of the chaise the gallant stepped back and began to take down my boxes.

"Now," I cried, going over to him, "there's naught in them but woman's gear. Hardly what you will be seeking. All the money I have you have found, and I own no jewels."

"Nay, Mistress," he returned with a gay laugh, "'t is not my doing. An I had my way I should have pouched the purse and wished you a merry journey and a safe one. But 't is not I who lead, and being told to find this or that I mean to find it, an it is in your possession."

"What is it you seek?" I demanded, relieved, but no less angry.

"An you knew that you might guess how valuable it is, whereas now you will not learn its worth until, happily, it is in the hands of the captain, or at least that is what he tells me, though I am as much in the dark as yourself. So, your Ladyship, though it cuts me to the quick, I must on with the search. If, however, I might make a suggestion, I would ask that yon black girl help

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with the unpacking and so keep the farthingales from off the road."

I sent Clarinda to aid in the rifling of my boxes and waited while he went through them with a thoroughness that showed a determination to leave no nook or cranny unexplored.

And all the while he recited bits of verse to fit the subject under scrutiny.

"Ah, ha! Master Herrick was the man to make you a rhyme to fit the occasion and to have an eye to finery:

"Whenas in silks my Julia goes,

"You remember, doubtless?" he cried, holding up a silken frock of mine, then picking out a blue cloak:

"Thy azure robe I did behold
As airy as the leaves of gold.

"Faith I know not what 'leaves of gold' he talks of, but 't is a fitting rhyme."

So he went on until at last, holding aloft a pair of satin slippers he voiced the daintiest of the verses, to my thinking:

"Her pretty feet
Like snails did creep

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A little out, and then,
As if they played at bo-peep,
Did soon draw in again.

"All hail to Master Herrick!" he cried, at the top of his lungs, dragging out this and that as he searched. "There's the joy of living and the laugh at death in his lines, though he's properly mournful at times like the rest of us poor sinners."

Meanwhile he had separated all papers of whatever sort he found. Some parchment; some household receipts that I had brought from Dene-wood, thinking that they might interest Granny; a letter or two that I treasured; my little book of maxims; in short, any scrap of writing that came under his hands. These he placed aside in a little pile on the road, adding to it as he found things in the various boxes. What he could be searching for I had not the faintest idea. 'T was impossible to find a solution to fit this case and so, perforce, I stood by idly, while our cheerful highwayman emptied my boxes and Clarinda packed them again as fast as she could.

At last it was finished and, taking the writings, he went with them to the silent figure on horse-

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back, who, giving up his pistols for the moment, examined them intently. The book of maxims he searched through, page by page, and so too with the receipts and leaves of writing paper, but he evidently found not that for which he was seeking.

He shook his head and whispered to his companion with much earnestness, though I could hear no sound of what they said.

“Nay, captain, there is naught else there,” said the voluble one positively, and after some further parley between them, he came back with all the things he had gathered and put them into the chaise. Then, seeing that Clarinda had already closed the last box, he called the postboy, and together they strapped them in place.

“May I escort you to your chariot?” he queried, addressing me with another wave of his hat and a most elaborate bow. “I offer ten thousand pardons for the delay; further I cannot go, seeing that we have taken naught, but the road is free for you and, though it breaks my heart to see you depart, I may not in conscience keep you longer.”

I crossed to the chaise, called Clarinda, and a

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moment later he closed the door for us. A crack of the whip, a rumbling, slow turning of the wheels, and we were off again.

As we moved forward, our gay-minded highwayman took off his hat, debonair and courteous to the last, and I heard a farewell catch sung in his sweet, high-pitched voice, but remember not the words, for, as I leaned forward and looked out of the window a moment at the more menacing figure on the horse, a sudden gust of wind tore down the road and lifted his mask, showing, for a brief instant, the face of Blundell.

With a cry I sank back into my seat, at first too numbed by this discovery even to think; then, slowly, my wits came back to me and I started to puzzle out the mystery.

What could I have that the man wanted? Little by little I pieced it out.

I had heard him vow he knew where information of a great treasure lay and that he meant to find it. I also remembered that he had had some dealings with old Schmuck, the magus.

I reached across the chaise and took up my little book of maxims. Carefully I pressed the silken cover and under it I could just feel the

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faint outline of the two pieces of silvered paper hidden there so long ago.

"He did n't find it," I said to myself, with a feeling of triumph, "and he shall never have it," I added, little knowing that the day would come when I should be only too glad to hand it to him.

CHAPTER XV

AT THE TOWERS

I HAD much food for thought during the rest of the journey. The map I had forgotten now took on an added value. Once or twice I was tempted to cut the stitches holding the silk cover of my little book, but changed my mind as it would serve no good purpose and put me to much trouble to sew the cover on again. I was assured that the map was safe and that was all I was concerned with for the time being.

But in the future I hoped to see Blundell punished for his impudent imposture. At first I thought to tell Horrie of the outrage but when my anger cooled I saw that this would involve him in a duel as his sister's protector, and, moreover, would disclose my possession of the map, which I now determined to keep secret, holding that if it was the key to hidden wealth it belonged to the American cause. Wherefore I took the

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precaution to order Clarinda to keep silent regarding our late adventure.

We entered the gates of the Towers about sunset. I had to admit at once that it was a lordlier place than Denewood, the deer park stretching for miles ere we came to the great house itself. The trees and lawns were magnificent, there could be no doubt of that. "But," I said to myself, "'t is not so homelike as Denewood," and that was the thought in my mind as I stepped out of the chaise, leaving the business of the luggage to Clarinda and two very grand footmen who came down the steps as if it were a condescension.

I went slowly into the house, my heart beating a little faster than its wont, for it was a strange return for me. I was anxious to see Granny and somewhat puzzled over the question of how my brothers would like their sister.

The hall I entered was a huge place with fireplace and walls of stone, around which ran an oaken gallery with a staircase of the same wood at one end. But, strange as it may appear, my thought was not of its magnificence.

"'T will be terribly cold in winter," I said to

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myself, and I compared it to our own cheery hall in Denewood, which I still reckoned as my home.

I wandered on, searching for the drawing-room where I thought Granny was like to be at that hour, feeling a little lonesome and neglected that no one was there to meet me, though I told myself they could have no means of knowing even that I was in England. Really I could not blame them—nor did I, though I could not help but note this lack of welcome.

I took a look into a vast dining-room which opened into a vaster library beyond, and, assured that I was headed in the wrong direction, I turned back.

As I re-entered the hall I heard a curious thud, thud, and there was Hal with a tennis bat, knocking a ball against the wall as I had seen him do outside the Dower House when he was a little lad.

I stood watching him for a while till, feeling my eyes upon him, he turned in my direction.

For a moment he stared, and then his face lighted up with a look of gladness.

"Save us!" he cried, at the top of his voice, "'t is Bee, with her hair as touseled as ever!"

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and he ran over to me and, taking me in his arms, gave me a great hug that lifted four years off my shoulders as if by magic. Hal had not changed a whit, and my eyes filled with tears and my heart with joy, for I felt his welcome to be sincere.

"Where 's Granny?" was my first question.

"In the drawing-room," said Hal, eying me curiously. "I 'd have you know we 're monstrous fashionable, Bee, now that Horrie is so horrid rich. We dine as late as four, after which we sit in state—and a great bore it is, I think. But how you 've grown, Bee. I wonder, will Granny know you? Come along, we 'll in to her."

He led the way into the drawing-room and there, screened from every draft, sat Granny, reading her newspapers by the light of the candles burning on the table at her side, just as she used to do. Beside her was Marlett, her tire-woman, and, as I paused to look, all the joyful, happy days of my childhood in the Dower House came rushing back into my memory. Dear old Granny! How I loved her!

I would have waited a moment longer, but Hal pressed forward.

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"Granny!" he cried, "here's your red Indian come back, but she wears so big a bonnet that I cannot tell if she has feathers in her hair or no."

But Granny was not listening to him. She looked at me and when I saw her face light up I knew how warm a place I had in her old heart.

"Bee! My little Bee," she murmured, and would have risen, but I flung myself at her feet and buried my head in her lap, the tears running down my cheeks; and, though I cried, 't was the first time since I had left America that I felt glad I had returned to England.

We shed a few tears together and then drying our eyes we looked at each other to see how time had treated us. Granny was little different and Marlett not at all so. She still looked as if she were made of a stiffer material than mere flesh and blood and I could not help feeling something of the awe I had had of her when I was a child.

"You have been riding without your mask, Miss," were her first words to me, and I laughed aloud, for it might have been but the day before instead of four long years, that she had said the same words to a small maid of twelve.

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A little later Horrie came in and found us all chatting away for dear life.

He was dressed very handsome and every inch of him showed the macaroni. He had a fine taste in ruffles and laces, and I guessed, as I learned later, that now the money had come to him he made it fly right merrily, and took his grand position in the world as became a man of his station.

He greeted me gladly enough.

"Faith, you 've grown finely and will be a credit to the family, after all!" he said, in a very grown-up way. "I 'm right glad the Colonies have not spoiled you; and I doubt not, when Granny and Marlett have tutored you a while, you 'll do very well indeed."

"A thousand thanks for your compliments, Horrie!" I cried back, rising and making him a curtsy, "but I fear I shall never satisfy your taste."

"Have done with your quizzing," he said sharply. "As head of the house 't is natural I should think of these things. At any rate now you 're here the family is together once more."

And, in a way, that sentence of Horrie's

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summed up the whole matter. I had hardly been in the house a week before my place in it was as fixed as though I had never left it. I was the sister of Sir Horace Travers and naught else. Though that to be sure was enough to plague me.

I soon found that nothing was expected of me. I was sixteen and even Marlett considered samplers too youthful an occupation for me. There were servants a-plenty, all under the eye of a housekeeper in rustling black silk and I should as soon have thought of ordering the stable men about as of suggesting aught to her. Granny had her journals, her tea, her chocolate, her old friends, and Marlett ever ready to anticipate her wants; I could be of little service to her. Horrie was earnest in the affairs of the estate, talked of standing for Parliament and rated me roundly for my "Whiggish notions on America," as he called them, vowing that the Colonies were the King's to do with as he pleased, and only a silly miss would talk of freedom.

Hal had a tutor for a year and was still a good deal of a boy, so that he was more companionable than the others. Yet truth to tell, with all their

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appearance of being busy, there was naught that any of them did with a whole heart.

It was all play, to my thinking. Granny played at being a great lady once more, Horrie played at being a fine gentleman, and Hal played with his books. Compared with John Travers, or Allan McLane, or a dozen others of the men I had known in America, they brought a smile to my lips. How could England hope to hold America when her men but played the live-long day and the greater part of the night?

And, worst of all, I knew that England was no place for me. There was naught for me to do in this land of my birth, no one who needed me, and none to heed my comings and goings so long as I followed the rules of fashion and kept my complexion shaded in the sun. I was lonely, and I longed for the land across the sea where I had my duties, my responsibilities, and my good friends. Lonely indeed, and there were nights when my pillow was wet with tears ere I slept!

But I loved Granny and I loved the boys, so I hid from them what was in my heart and went through the monotonous days with as fair a smile as I could muster. Indeed had I told them I was

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far from happy in all the splendor of their grand estate they would have thought me crazed.

So for the most part I kept silent but now and then I must needs break out, as happened one day when spring was approaching and Horrie had begun to talk of opening his London house.

"'T is then you will see the real world!" he exclaimed, striding up and down before the fireplace with his hands behind his back. "Od's Life! I can scarce wait for the routs and drums. 'T will open your eyes, Mistress Bee."

"Nay, my eyes are open, Horrie," I retorted. "Think you I mean to go to balls and spend half my days in bed and the other half before the mirror?"

"And why not?" asked Horrie with a twinkle in his eye. "What else does a girl care for? To be sure you'll go, and marry an Earl or Duke, I doubt not. An American princess can do no less for her family."

"Right for once!" I cried, a little nettled at his banter, "but she can do more. She can marry an American gentleman."

"I pray you, step back off the parquet," Horrie

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said calmly, "you 'll scorch it if you 're so hot-tempered, and as to London, you 'll go there, my dear. Granny and Marlett are even now devising costumes for you to wear—and you 'll like it, trust me."

So it always went, and they seemed so satisfied with everything they did, and were so ready to laugh at my notions, that I soon learned to hold my tongue, taking what came to me with as good a grace as I could muster.

From various sources I had news of what was going forward with the war in America; but it always turned out that each engagement was a fine victory for the British. Indeed, on paper, the Americans were beaten so often that I began to doubt all such reports, as did most people; though, as a matter of fact, but little interest was taken, out of political circles, in what went on in the Colonies.

One morning, however, came news that was true. I found on the breakfast table a letter from Jack and held it in my hand a while, hardly daring to open it because it meant so much to me. But at length I broke the seals.

"My dearest Beatrice," it began, and I read

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the words again, for it sounded as if Jack missed me, and that made me glad.

My Dearest Beatrice:

You don't know how many times I have called myself a fool for sending you off as I did. Surely some better way might have been devised, and Mrs. Mummer has not given over reproaching me for letting you go at all. Little Peg is disconsolate and goes about with a kitten hugged to her breast and I have heard her telling it that if it's a "g-g-good k-k-kitty perhaps B-bee will c-come back b-before it grows to be a s-s-stupid cat." Even Mummer's face is longer and more solemn than ever, and he talks less, though you will scarce believe that possible, so you see you are greatly missed. But I, more than any, feel your absence, because now when I go to Denewood I find it so lonely that Mrs. Mummer complains that I eat nothing and scolds all in the kitchen with such vigor that I cannot help but stuff myself in order to save the cook a rating.

I laughed aloud not so much because there was anything so very funny in the letter, as because my heart was glad to know that I was not forgotten in the place I called my home.

"Why, Bee, you look *almost* pretty," cried Hal. "What has stirred you so?"

"'T is only a letter from America," I answered, and went on with my reading.

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We have suffered a terrible blow where we feared it least. I can scarce believe it yet, but Benedict Arnold has turned traitor! He was recently appointed to West Point, as a special mark of his Excellency's favor, and all but succeeded in selling that post to the enemy. I have just seen an effigy of Arnold with a noose around his neck and his lame leg on a chair, driven in a cart through the streets where he used to ride in such state. He escaped down the Hudson but an hour or two before his Excellency arrived at the fort; and, as his wife continued to correspond with him, she was ordered to leave Philadelphia. Poor lady so lately envied, now pitied by all.

"Poor lady, indeed!" I murmured, my thoughts going back to the night of my first ball.

Jack wrote me of many trivial things that had happened, knowing that I would be interested in them; but his talk of the war in the South brought an anxious throb to my heart.

They are to push it, and Allan frets to be there with the troop. I have no doubt we shall be ordered to the front shortly and then I must leave Denewood without a mistress. Well, the old place has lost its sunshine for me.

I must close this long letter, not knowing when I may find the chance to send another. Letters for me, if you still remember, may be sent under cover of John Smith, Esquire, at the White Horse Inn, in Fetter Lane, Lon-

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don, and will reach me at Denewood sooner or later, where we all pine to hear that your new home has not supplanted Germantown in your affections.

I am sending you money by this same hand and, if you would pleasure me, you will spend some of it in having your portrait painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds who, I have heard, does as fair work in this way as may be obtained. I want the picture for the hall in Denewood and your compliance with this request will give me much happiness.

Please present my respectful greetings to your grandmother Madame Travers and to Sir Horace and your brother Hal.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN TRAVERS.

I told Granny of my letter and she seemed scarce interested. She dismissed all news of the war by saying that she made it a point never to read politics, and when I said something of my fear for John when he went South to fight, she complained that she felt a draft and asked would I get her a shawl. It was not that she did n't love me, but all of my interests were so outside her life that she could n't understand any one thinking twice about them.

So I was off to my room with the letter and read it again and again, laughing a little over

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Peggy but crying a great deal more over vain wishes it brought to me.

I was the only one who was really unhappy, but Hal had his gloomy thoughts now and then which he confided to me.

"I tell you, Bee," he would say, "this thing of being a younger brother is a monstrous nuisance! Horrie's right enough, but I'd like to be my own banker and spend my money as I pleased, beholden to no one. 'T is all luck in this world. Look at that rake, Merchant—There's an example for you!"

"What about him?" I asked, for I knew naught of what he was speaking.

"Have you not heard of Billy Bluebones's treasure?" he cried in astonishment. "Why, it has been the talk of the town this past six months!"

At the mention of that curious name I remembered having heard it before at Squire Sunderland's, but I could not recall what was said about it and asked Hal to tell me.

"This Billy Bluebones was a pirate," he began, but I broke in upon him.

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"That was n't his real name," I protested. "It's so silly."

"Nay, I know naught of that," said he petulantly. "'T is what he called himself, and no sillier than Blackbeard, though I doubt not these gentry take up such bloody titles to scare the timid. However, 'Billy Bluebones' he called himself and he did a fine business in pirating. He hid his treasure safe enough, for after he died some of his followers went searching for it without success, I believe, though you can't put much faith in these stories, and until Merchant picked up the loot none but sea-faring men gave Billy Bluebones a thought."

"And was a treasure found?" I asked.

"Aye, that there was, by this chap named Merchant," Hal went on, "who ran off from the bailiffs in London and shipped aboard an ill-found privateer bound for the Americas. As luck would have it, she fell to pieces and dropped a few of her crew upon the coast of Virginia, 't is said. At any rate Merchant was one of these, but so far gone was he that the others left him to die on the beach. And, to make a long story short, he came to, wandered about half-daft for

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a day or so, and then ran flat into the treasure. There are a dozen tales told of how he found it. Some say he was buried for dead and came to life in the pirate's storehouse. Others that the gold was washed out by floods and still others—but there are half a score of different rumors, any one of which may be true. At all events Merchant is back in London with a King's ransom in his possession, of that there is n't the slightest doubt; and how he found it makes no odds, for 't is Billy Bluebones's treasure and he is spending it as fast as he can turn a card or back a horse. Think of the luck of the man, Bee! It makes me long to be out of England where all is old and worn out and a man is little better than a dog if he rattles not with gold at every step he takes."

"Never mind, Hal," I said to comfort him. "Who knows what a year may bring forth or what is in store for us? Your luck is better now than it was in a counting-house in Amsterdam with Mr. Van der Helst to drive you. Had Horrie not come into his money you might have ended your days there."

"Aye, there you're right, Bee," he cried. "When I think of those days I feel ashamed for

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grumbling that I have n't the moon," and he went off to the stables whistling.

In London I found that things were somewhat different than with us in the country. It is true that there were many macaronis, as the men of fashion were called, who thought of little outside their betting, but there were others, who came to the house whose wits were sharp and who knew what went forward in the world, and some two or three who had a hand in shaping events.

It was all very gay and I will not deny that I had much pleasure in the jollities of that season. Squire Sunderland came and I was glad to have an opportunity to thank him for his post-chaise and we laughed over my predicament on the beach, now but a memory.

Another visitor was an old friend, Mr. Guy Vernon, who had aided me years before when I was a lonely little maid on board a British ship of the line where he was an officer. He entered the house one day with a stoutish gentleman whose name I did not catch and, although I noted that there were murmurs when they ap-

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peared, I forgot them in greeting Mr. Vernon whom I greatly liked. He and I sat and talked together for a while and I rallied him for the useless lives the men in England lead and compared them to those in America.

Instead of answering, Mr. Vernon called across the room to the stout gentleman with whom he had come.

"Oh, I say, Charles, come to my rescue. I'm being abused as a gamester and an idler and you too are included in the condemnation."

There was a general movement in the room towards where we were sitting, as the man named Charles came over and joined us.

"'T is the sad truth that you're an idler, Vernon," he said, assuming an air of concern, "but I am the hardest-worked man in England."

"And pray what is your business?" I asked curiously, at which there was a roar of laughter from the young men, though it was not joined in by the one to whom I spoke.

"I am engaged in keeping Lord North awake," he answered gravely, and I half guessed his meaning, for Lord North was the bitterest enemy America had.

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"Then you are—are—"

"Charles James Fox, at your service," he answered with a smile.

"And your America's best friend in Parliament," Mr. Vernon added.

"America is my country, you know," I said, looking at Mr. Fox.

"Then am I doubly tied to it," he replied gallantly, and took my hand, remarking at the same time, "but are you never going to drive out the invader?"

"Never doubt it!" I cried. "Even the Tories are giving up hope, and their musicians are asked to play not 'Britons, strike home' but 'Britons, *go* home.'—And indeed, that is all there is left for them to do."

"But we always defeat you in battle," a young man remarked after the laugh had subsided.

"Perhaps you do," I answered,—“in your despatches home!"

"Nay, but we won the battle of Bunker Hill," he protested, while Mr. Fox looked keenly at me with a half smile on his face.

"Aye, that you did," I retorted, my blood rising as I defended the land of my adoption against

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these Englishmen; "you won the battle,—but we have the hill. Indeed you can hold just so much of our country as you cover with men,—and not an inch more!"

"Bravo! Bravo!" cried a voice at my elbow that was new to me and I turned to see a man writing busily on a tablet. "Faith, I love a patriot!"

"'T is Mr. Walpole," said some one, and this was taken by us both as an introduction, and I curtsied my best to one of whom I had heard much.

So it came about, in one way or another, that I met some of these gentlemen, who, though they played the dandy and macaroni, were nevertheless shaping the affairs of their country to their liking. Mr. Fox, for example, though he was cordially hated by the King, was also feared by him, and so at last had his way, to the great gain of America.

It was with some diffidence that I approached the subject of the portrait with Granny, for I was not sure of her approval, but I was relieved to find that her views were far otherwise.

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"'T is a very proper sentiment on Mr. Travers's part," she said promptly. "I shall write to Sir Joshua and tell him he is to have the honor." Which she straightway did.

One morning some days later a polite note was handed to her from Sir Joshua saying that he had but lately returned from Streatham, that he had much work on hand and proposed a tour of the Low Countries, so that he must forego the honor and pleasure she offered.

I thought all was over as far as he was concerned, and could have cried like a baby had I been alone; but I had not counted on Granny. She fair bristled.

"Order our chairs!" she cried to Marlett. "He does n't want to paint her, does n't he? What right has the son of a preaching schoolmaster to have likes or dislikes? We'll go to Leicester Square and see what tune he sings."

With Granny to think was to act, and it was not long before we were at the painter's door and information was brought to us that Sir Joshua was within.

"Come, child," cried Granny, and we descended from our chairs.

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For my part I could not see what advantage our visit could gain us. If Sir Joshua would n't paint me, Granny could n't make him, though she did sneer at his birth, which, I doubt not, was respectable enough.

So I mounted the great stairway, with its curious balustrade, shaped with a deep curve to accommodate the wide sweep of his fair sitters' skirts, wondering why we were there at all.

CHAPTER XVI

SIR JOSHUA PAINTS A PORTRAIT

AS we entered the room there came towards us with a very brisk manner a man who was below middle height and rather inclined to stoutness. His face was pleasant enough but much pitted with smallpox and his mouth was disfigured as the result of an accident in his youth when he was thrown from his horse and a surgeon had cut away a portion of his lip. This slightly affected his pronunciation of certain words; and, moreover, he was very deaf, for he carried an ear-trumpet. All these defects seem to make up an unattractive personality, but in Sir Joshua, for it was he of course, one forgot these misfortunes at once. His air was so engaging and pleasant, his movements so quick and active that he gave the impression of a young man.

"Now this is good of you!" he exclaimed, bowing over Granny's hand. "You've come to con-

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dole with me that I am unable to paint your granddaughter."

"Nay," said Granny suavely, "I have come to you for advice. You see the child's picture must be painted."

"I am desolated that I cannot undertake it," Sir Joshua put in. "But my engagements are such—"

"Oh, that I appreciate," said Granny, holding up her hand; "but, not to trespass on your time, let me come to the point at once. As you cannot paint the picture, to whom would you advise me to take her? She is not the ordinary maid and a mere journeyman could scarce represent her. Take off your hat, child, and let Sir Joshua see what I mean."

Blushing to be thus put upon exhibition I yet complied, while Sir Joshua, setting great horn-bound spectacles on his nose, began to hum, hum, to himself as he looked at me.

"Of course, there's Benjamin West," Granny suggested, and would have gone on but Sir Joshua cut her short.

"She is no classic column to be set like stone," he said impatiently.

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"True, true," agreed Granny. "Romney might make a success of her," she went on, regarding me with her head on one side and her quizzing-glass held to her eye.

"You mean the man in Cavendish Square?" exclaimed Sir Joshua contemptuously. "No, no, Mrs. Travers, ma'am. He would scarce do for her."

"Then I take it you think we should go to Thomas Gainsborough," Granny remarked, making a little movement toward the door as if the matter had been determined, though in truth Gainsborough had not been mentioned between them. "Gainsborough is the right one," she added with finality.

"Stop, madam!" cried Sir Joshua. "Titian is the right one—but, failing him, you will have to put up with one Joshua Reynolds—as well you knew when you bade her unbonnet," he went on, shaking a playful finger at Granny.

"But you have no time," cried Granny with an arch look at him, "and we must be gone."

"You 'll be gone into the studio," commanded Sir Joshua; yet there was something of pleading in his tone also. "Think of the pleasure it will

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be to portray flesh and blood instead of faces raddled with powder and paint, and do not force me to postpone it."

"But the child is not dressed for the occasion," protested Granny, letting him have his way, nevertheless.

"'T will be all the better if she's unstudied. Half the charm might go with too great preparation," Sir Joshua assured her, leading the way into the studio.

As we walked in Granny said something of my having been to the Americas and Sir Joshua turned to me with an exclamation of surprise.

"Has so young a lady made so great a journey?"

"Oh, yes," I answered, "there—and back again," I added with a sigh.

"How liked you the Colonies?" he questioned.

"They ceased to be Colonies even before I arrived there," I replied bristling, as I ever did, on this subject. "I believe that the British still hold Canada; but *we* have been free and independent states this four years."

"Hey day!" he cried, much amused, "am I to paint a rebel?" and even as he spoke his easel was

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set up and a great canvas placed upon it. He passed his finger over its surface and seemed to forget all about me, talking to himself fretfully.

"Though I ground my canvases with Indian red and black, yet they crack. I am persuaded that all good pictures crack and that there are no fast colors nowadays. I have even taken a Titian apart inch by inch and examined it chemically, yet can I find no difference 'twixt his pigments and mine. Mix a little wax with the colors, say I, and—don't tell anybody," he ended, with a nod and a smile at me.

Then he began to mix and compound his colors.

"Tell me about this country you claim as your own," he remarked, eying me. "Is it as handsome as England?"

"As handsome as England!" I cried, fired at the suggestion. "Sure, there's no place on earth so beautiful as America. The sunlight is more golden, the sky is bluer, the water is clearer, the grass—"

"But 't is a wilderness, is it not?" he interrupted.

"'T is a rich, prosperous, cultivated country,"

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I exclaimed in one breath. "Why, Denewood, my home, is the prettiest spot in the world! We pride ourselves on our flowers and fruits, and an army could camp under our trees. You never saw such elms and oaks, such beeches and chestnuts and evergreens, 't is—"

"I have it! I have it!" cried Sir Joshua, taking up his brushes. "Madam Travers," he went on, over his shoulder, to Granny, "pray, ma'am, make yourself comfortable. You'll find Miss Burney's 'Evelina' at your elbow. 'T is a right elegant novel and will amuse you." Then he addressed me: "Turn your head more to the left, child, and stand *so!*" Whereupon he began to paint, seemingly lost to everything but the canvas before him and his model.

I stood there for four mortal hours while he painted, stopping only to consult my reflection in a mirror. While he worked and I stood as still as I was able for the aches and pains that gripped me, many people came and went; but Sir Joshua gave them no heed. He plied his brushes furiously, as though he and I and the picture were the only things in the world.

But I who had no occupation to interest me,

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found much to claim my attention, and indeed this helped mightily to make those long hours pass more quickly.

One person I particularly noted. He was a great, untidy mountain of flesh who talked much to Granny and was continually in convulsive movement of the hands, feet or knees; while at times his lips would twitch as though he had no control over his muscles. With him was a white mouse of a man who circled around him from side to side as if uncertain with which ear he heard him the better. The big man seemed most impatient of him, and the other would retreat like a chidden spaniel, always to return in a hurry at the first word that fell from the lips of his fat friend.

After a while, as more people came into the studio and clustered around Granny, I could hear their remarks quite plainly, and it became evident to me that they all knew and counted upon Sir Joshua's deafness. It was not that they said unkind things, for it was plain they all held him in great affection, but they were unrestrained in their speech as they could not have been had he been able to hear.

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"The Duke of Rutland gave twelve hundred pounds for his 'Nativity,' boomed the big man.

"An unexampled price!" squeaked the white mouse, with a marked Scottish accent.

"Would that I could earn so much as easily," sighed a very pretty lady they called Mrs. Sheridan. "But even yet Sir Joshua is not a favorite at court."

And so the gossip went on until finally the busy painter drew back from the canvas, gave one look at it and another into his mirror and then threw down his brushes.

"'T is finished!" he cried, and turned from the easel so that all might see.

They clustered around it immediately and as their eyes fell upon it a spontaneous burst of applause came from them.

"'T is marvelous!" cried Mrs. Sheridan, clasping her hands together with the prettiest of gestures.

"'T is Beatrice!" declared Granny, at which Sir Joshua bowed profoundly.

"I ask no higher praise, ma'am," he said. "I could not improve on the original," then, as his eye fell upon the fat man he greeted him with

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great affection and I learned that this was Doctor Johnson who had made a dictionary.

"He must needs have a great head to hold all that spelling," I said to myself; and, as I gazed at him, Sir Joshua led him up to me.

"You must know my pretty rebel," he announced; "have a care or she will supplant little Burney in your affections."

"Nay, now," said Doctor Johnson, in his big voice, "I 'm willing to love all mankind except an American," nevertheless he shook my hand and looked down at me in a most kindly way.

"May I not see the picture, too?" I asked rather timidly.

"Indeed, I should like your opinion," answered Sir Joshua courteously, and I stepped to the easel.

Standing off at a little distance I looked at the picture, entranced. Sir Joshua had done what I believe a true artist must always do. He had given me a beauty I had never seen in my face; and, for the rest, the figure stood under a great tree on a hillside and in the distance was a sunny landscape. I looked at it while tears came into my eyes.

Impulsively I turned to Sir Joshua.

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"'T is real American sunshine!" I cried, "and thank you for making me so much lovelier than I could ever be. I am proud to send such a picture to Denewood."

After a word or two Sir Joshua brought up to me a niece of his, a very sweet young lady, by the name of Miss Offie Palmer.

"Is it not wonderful," I said to her, still gazing at the picture. "To think that in four hours this has grown up where before there was but a blank canvas."

"Won't you sit down," said Miss Palmer. "You must be very tired and my uncle will not let you go until you have partaken of some refreshments. Yes, he is wonderful," she went on, "he was the first to dare to set his figures in light and airy surroundings. Sometimes he has as many as six sitters a day, but not often, unless he means his drapery-men to do their part. He thinks his best work is done in one uninterrupted sitting and he is not always merciful to his model—he has painted me," she ended with a laugh, "so I know."

A Mr. Gwatkin, who later married pretty Miss Palmer, and also Mr. Sheridan, who I was told, was a writer of plays, came in and were kind

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enough to compliment me on the portrait as if I had had something to do with it.

"Sir Joshua prides himself upon the number of square yards of canvas he can cover," said Mr. Sheridan, "but I think he has rarely worked to better advantage—even when he has had Mrs. Sheridan for a model," he added with a smile.

"The picture must be exhibited," said Miss Palmer, as if it were a settled matter.

"Oh, no, no," I protested. "It must go to Denewood at once; Mr. Travers wants it."

"Then, if I am to be deprived of it so quickly," said Sir Joshua, "you must at least promise to sit to me again when I return from the Low Countries."

That I gladly agreed to do although something prompted me to add, "if I am in England."

I think I had never been so happy since my return as I was that day, for the portrait that I was to send to Jack seemed to bring me closer to him and to America than I had been for long.

I sang softly to myself, just humming from sheer gladness, and I had no warning of what was to come as I walked into the hall on our return from Leicester Square.

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"There's a man asking for you, Miss," said Perkins, one of the servants.

"For me?" I replied, surprised. "What sort of a man?"

"I should say he was an upper servant, Miss," was the answer, "but he bade me say his name was Mummer."

CHAPTER XVII

MUMMER BRINGS BAD NEWS

AS Perkins, the footman, spoke the name "Mummer," my heart gave a great bound of apprehension and I must have gone white, for Granny, following me on Marlett's arm, looked at me for a moment and then cried out in alarm:

"What is it, child? You look as if you'd seen a ghost!"

That brought me to my senses and I tried to rid my mind of the sudden fear that had entered it.

"'T is Mummer, the steward of Denewood," I explained to Granny, and without another word ran to find him.

The moment I saw his long, solemn face I knew that he brought ill news.

"What is it, Mummer?" I cried, giving him my hand. "Is there aught wrong with Mr. Trav-ers?"

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"Oh, Miss Bee," he murmured, "I know not how to tell you."

He stopped, looking about him as if he sought a means of escape from doing what he knew he must.

"What is it?" I cried in anguish. "Has Master John been wounded?"

"Aye, Miss Bee, and worse," he answered.

"Worse?" I exclaimed. "What could be worse?" And then I understood that he feared to tell me.

"Is he dead, Mummer?" I questioned, in a hushed voice.

"Aye, I'm afeard so, Miss," he answered, and I saw the tears gather and roll slowly down his seamed face.

For a moment I was as one stunned. I had been the happiest girl in the world, thinking of the pleasure Jack would have out of the portrait and so pleased that it was like me, and while my heart still sang with joy came this word of his death. It was impossible to believe!

"Why did you say you were 'afraid he was dead,' Mummer?" I demanded somewhat harshly, for I was not myself.

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"I 'll tell you all we know, Miss," he answered, visibly trying to keep his feelings under control. "He went with his troop to the campaign in the South and fought in Virginia under Major McLane."

"Yes," I answered, "I knew that he hoped to go South."

"Well, Miss," Mummer went on, "after the campaign there, he volunteered to go with Morgan's men, so we learned from Major McLane, and there was a battle, a bloody battle, Miss, at a place called the Cowpens, in South Carolina. Well, Master John was in that battle, and since then we've heard naught of him, though Major McLane has hunted for him high and low."

He stopped as his voice choked and hung his head dejectedly.

"And you do not know for certain that he is dead?" I cried, hope springing up in my breast.

"Nay, Miss, not what you'd call certain," he admitted, "but even Mrs. Mummer has given over all hope, and 't was Major McLane bade us send for you. Here's a letter will explain the reason for that."

He handed me an envelope and I almost cried

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out as I recognized John's handwriting upon it. I crushed the seals and, unfolding the paper, read as follows:

Dear Beatrice: If aught goes wrong with me, all I have is yours. The papers are all in the hands of Mr. Chew, the attorney in Philadelphia, with the exception of one document which he will need and that is in the place you have the secret of. Faithfully,

JOHN TRAVERS.

It was dated the previous autumn and I looked to Mummer for further enlightenment.

"He gave it to me, Miss, telling me I must put it into your hands if aught befell him; and so Major McLane sent me off to you. I've come to take you home, Miss Bee. You're the head of the family now and—and—" he stopped, turning his face away from me.

"Has aught been heard of Mark Powell or Bill Schmuck?" I asked.

"Nay, not a word," he answered, "but so many were lost or wounded in that battle that there's no comfort to be got in that thought. Indeed 't is said that Morgan was forced to leave his wounded with the people living about there. They call it a great victory for us, Miss Bee, and that 's something, though not much."

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"And has every one given up hope?" I asked.

"Aye, even Mrs. Mummer, who was the last," he answered sorrowfully.

Then, hesitating, he drew forth another letter. "Nay, there's another, but this will tell you," and he handed it to me.

I opened it hastily and read:

Dearest Bee: Don't you believe what Mummer thinks is so it isn't so. Your loving little

PEGGY.

"Bless the child," I cried; "'t is the first good word I've had. Mummer," I went on, near beside myself, "I don't believe it. It can't be true that John is dead. It just can't."

"I'm glad to hear you say so, Miss," he answered drearily, "but you'll come back with me? You're the head of the family now."

It was plain that Mummer thought that John was no longer alive and was anxious that I should assume the ownership of Denewood, but never before did heiress hear of her accession to fortune with so sad a heart, nor could I persuade myself, in spite of all that I had been told, that Jack was dead.

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"I 'll go home with you, Mummer," I answered stoutly, "though 't will not be as mistress of Dene-wood, but to search for Master John. I believe he is alive and I mean to find him."

"I hope you may be right, Miss," he said, with a sorrowful shake of his head.

"But I 'm sure of it," I went on. "He was so big and strong. You remember when we found him wounded after the battle of Germantown; he was sore hurt then, but think how quickly he recovered."

"Aye, but a small stone can break a great jar," Mummer answered sadly, "and a little bullet hole can let out a strong man's life. Master John has not recovered quickly this time, or he would have let us know. He would understand how anxious we would be, and 't would not be like him to leave us in doubt."

That last struck me as the hardest argument to answer, but I put it from me. I did not mean to let myself believe for an instant that Jack was dead and I repeated what little Peg, bless her, had written to me. "It is n't so! It is n't so!"

"How soon can we start for home?" I asked, ignoring Mummer's croakings.

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"As soon as we can get to Holland and join Captain Timmons," he answered. "He bade me say he would have come himself had I not been here to take his place. He thought it was better that he should stay by the vessel and so have all in readiness."

Good Captain Timmons had kept his word, to come for me, and was waiting to do his share in forwarding me to the place I wished I had never left.

"'T was kind in Captain Timmons to come," I said, half to myself.

"And why should he not?" asked Mummer. "'T is your own ship and he your servant, as am I."

"Nay, now, I shall not have it," I cried, stung by the way he accepted the situation. There was no honester nor more devoted man than Mummer was to John Travers and the fact that he could talk as if Denewood had already passed into other hands showed how certain he was.

"Let us have no more talk like that," I went on, "and until I am ready to call myself mistress of Denewood let matters rest as they have hitherto."

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"When will you be going, Miss?" he asked, not at all put out by my vehemence.

"I shall make ready to start to-morrow," I answered, "but first you must see Granny." And I led him to the library where we found her waiting for me to bring the news.

"What is it, Bee?" she demanded, giving Mummer a curt nod. "Has Mr. Travers sent you more money?"

"You can tell Madame what you have come for," I said, addressing Mummer.

"'T is told in a word," he answered, with a stiff bow to Granny. "Miss Beatrice inherits Denewood and all else, under the master's will."

"I am grieved to hear that your Master is dead," Granny began, but I interrupted.

"'T is not at all certain, Granny," I protested. "It is only known that Cousin John has not been heard of for some time," and I told her of the circumstances.

"And when was this battle?" she asked Mummer.

"In January, Madame," he answered.

"And this is late June," she pursed up her

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lips significantly. "It is too bad!" she ended.

"But, Granny," I broke in, seeing that she believed the worst. "I don't care what any one says, I'm going to see for myself and search America till I find him, for I know that he is alive!"

"That does your heart credit, Bee," she answered coolly, "but it is hardly practical, is it? The estates are all left to Miss Beatrice?" she went on, addressing Mummer.

"Granny, don't you understand that I am going to-morrow?" I burst in.

She looked at me a moment as if she could not believe her ears.

"My child, you are talking nonsense!" she said, in an even voice. "'T is not to be thought of. You speak as if this was an age of miracles and you could ship back and forth to America in a week or less. Your sensibility is vastly becoming, but I doubt not that a search has been made already."

"Granny," I insisted, and I think I must have looked as earnest as I felt, for she opened her eyes wide in surprise. "Granny, I am going! Let it be understood now. I've crossed the

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ocean twice before without hurt and now I must go again. Please say I may."

"I say, you shall not!" she retorted, angry with me for the first time in her life that I remember. "What? Have you no love for your home? or for your brothers, to say nothing of me, that you are so ready to leave us on a wild-geese chase?"

"Nay, I love you and I love the boys," I pleaded, "but this is not my home. Here I'm but a doll and not a real thing in your life. If I were gone, would your routs be any the less well attended? Would your journals be any the less interesting? Would your gossip with the dowager ladies be any the less lively? Nay, I'm sure they would not. I know you love me, but I am not needful for your pleasure nor your comfort, and so it is with Hal and Horrie. I am not part of their lives and I'm tired of being naught but the sister of Sir Horace. My home is in America where there are those who need me; where I have duties to perform, where—where, I find myself of some use in the world! If I had never gone there perhaps I would know nothing different from the life I have led here for almost a year, but I have seen that a maid

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can be more than an ornament and, although Denewood is not so splendid as the Towers, and Philadelphia is nothing to this great London, yet my heart's home is there and I must go. Please! Please!" I ended, and threw myself at her feet, the salt tears flowing down my cheeks as I gave tongue to all the pent-up longing for America that I had kept under for so many weeks.

I know not what effect my plea would have had upon Granny if it had n't been seconded by Mummer, who at this point brought out a powerful argument in favor of my designs.

"I beg your pardon, Madame Travers, ma'am," he said suddenly. "'T is not such a useless journey as you seem to think. I beg you to believe that it is highly necessary that Miss Beatrice take immediate steps to enter upon her inheritance, or at least put herself upon American soil without delay. If she is out of the country and does not press her claims in person the entire estate will be given to the next of kin, or else taken over by the state."

"Nonsense!" cried Granny. "The man's a fool! Do you think we have no law courts here?"

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"Aye, Madame," returned Mummer, in an even voice. "But you forget that we in America are no longer Colonies and our courts would hardly recognize the jurisdiction of the English."

"You 're naught but a rebel!" retorted Granny, though there was less anger and opposition in her tones, for she began to understand that what Mummer said was true.

"So you see, ma'am," Mummer went on, as if she had n't spoken, "it 's most important that Miss Travers return as soon as may be. One of her own ships awaits her orders in Holland, and, although it 's not likely, still a claim might be set up—"

"Enough!" cried Granny. "I see, Bee, you must have your way. Marlett, take the man and make him comfortable; and after that go and help Clarinda pack Miss Bee's apparel. Tell Perkins I am not at home to any one. These last few hours, Bee, my dear, we 'll spend together."

CHAPTER XVIII

BACK AT DENEWOOD

THERE were further protests against my going from both Hal and Horrie; Sir Horace in particular blustered about, to which I paid but scant attention, for to neither of the boys did I feel any obligation of obedience and Granny had given her consent. Then, too, the estates of Denewood were a powerful argument in my favor, for though I think they were not influenced unduly by this, neither were they indifferent to the wealth, and already Horrie said he would settle the jointure he had proposed for me, upon Hal. Which was generous but premature, as I took pains to tell him.

It was with very mixed feelings that I finally said good-by to them all; for, while I was grieved to leave Granny and the boys, my heart longed for America, and I was fair mad to be on my way to look for Jack. So, although there were tears at parting, I confess that I left England gladly.

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Mummer, in his silent way, took me in charge and brought me safe to Holland without adventure, whereupon Captain Timmons, having all things ready, made sail ere we had been an hour aboard the *Alert*.

On the voyage across the Atlantic I talked much to the captain about Jack's disappearance, for I refused to speak of him as dead; and, although he would nod his head and seem to agree with me and all the arguments I put forth, I saw, nevertheless, that he but humored me and that he was as sure as was Mummer that we would see Mr. Travers no more in this world.

Mummer, of course, now that his mission was accomplished and there was no further need of words, relapsed into his usual silent self, and would sit by the hour in the forepeak of the vessel, wondering, I doubt not, how matters fared at Denewood since he had left it. He was a queer and silent man, but his devotion to the Estate in Germantown was whole-hearted and sincere and, though he showed little of his feelings at any time, I knew he grieved sorely for the master he thought was dead.

As for me I never once let myself admit that

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it could be possible, though I could not help but realize that I was almost alone in that belief. There was only little Peg, and oh! how many times did that letter of hers brace my faith and give me courage. "It is n't so!" I would quote again and again, and if I had loved the stuttering little mite before, I loved her doubly now.

The voyage was a prosperous one and we came into Delaware Bay on a fair wind that had helped us all the way. The heat of midsummer lay over the land and as we sailed up the river I thought no country in all the world so beautiful as this.

Arriving at Philadelphia Mummer went at once to the City Tavern, and there was the chariot and a cart for my luggage, which had been waiting only two days, so nicely had Mrs. Mummer timed our coming.

We delayed not, but were on our way to Dene-wood at once and as we passed the familiar roads, lined with butternuts and willows, I felt almost happy, while Clarinda was half mad with joy and the tune she had been humming ever since we left London broke out into a glad song.

"'Deed, Miss Bee, 't is like the sunshine after

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a hard rain," she cried. "Why, they all in that London town says to me 'you ain't going back to be a slave, is ye? Don't you know you's free just the minute you set your foot in England?' and I tells 'em: 'Honey, what I want to be free for? Whose goin' to take care o' Miss Bee,' I says, 'if Clarinda stays behind! I'se goin' back home,' I says, 'goin' where there's sweet p'taters and corn and a real sun a-shinin'.' That's what I tells 'em, Miss Bee; for certain'y I'd rather be a slave at Denewood than free in England."

And I knew how Clarinda felt, although the positions were reversed. In England I had felt the slave, or nearly that, and I knew I was free at Denewood.

As we entered the long drive the chariot stopped and Mummer got down to open the door, and a moment later little Peg scrambled into my lap.

"Oh, B-b-bee!" she sobbed, and as I put my arms around her I realized how much I had missed that valiant little maid.

"Y-y-you don't b-b-believe it?" she whispered between sobs.

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"Nay, Peggy darling," I answered, scarce less upset than she, "but is there no news?"

"Not y-yet," she said, shaking her head sorrowfully, "but he's s-s-somewhere, B-bee, and w-we'll find him n-n-now you're here!"

I let the tears flow as they pleased and they started afresh as we drew up to the door and Mrs. Mummer ran with her arms outstretched to receive me. I went to her with a cry of mingled pain and joy upon my lips.

"Dearie! Dearie!" she whispered in my ear, as she patted me and tried with all the love she bore me to ease my well-nigh bursting heart. "Dearie, I knew you'd come. I knew you'd come," she murmured, "the luck of the house has returned to it, please God, never to go again."

She led me through the rows of bobbing servants, up into my own room, and she and I and little Peg shut the door on all the world and did our best to comfort one another as we wept in each other's arms.

"'Tis a sad home-coming, my dearie," said Mrs. Mummer, when we had composed ourselves a little. "How often I have wished that you had

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never gone, taking your lucky sixpence with you."

"But I only took half of it, Mrs. Mummer," I said hesitatingly.

She looked at me in wide-eyed surprise.

"Did Master John have the other half?" she fair screamed. "Did he have it?"

"Aye," I answered, "and the gipsy said the half would be luckier than the whole."

"If I had known that I should not have despaired," she declared eagerly. "Tell me, is your half of the sixpence bright?" and she caught at her throat as if she could scarce frame the question, so great was her anxiety.

"Of course it is," I answered, not catching the drift of her meaning, and I pulled out my bit of the broken coin strung from a ribbon about my neck.

She scanned it eagerly and then burst into cries of joy.

"Now Heaven be praised for all its mercies," she murmured prayerfully. "I hope again."

"But what is the meaning?" I asked, quite mystified.

"'T would be as black as coal were anything fatal come to Master John. Didst never know

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that? He's well, somewhere, if he still has his bit of sixpence!"

"I have always felt sure he would come back," I answered, "not because of the sixpence but—but, because my heart told me it must be."

"Aye! Aye!" she answered. "You had faith, as little Peg has it, but they all talked to me and said this and that, showing me how he *must* be gone till I could not but believe them, for it is not in reason that he could be alive and stay hidden all this while. But I'm done with reason, Miss Bee; now that you're back, you bring the luck of the house with you and we'll live to see Master John walk in the front door and I'll take joy in watching him eat many another good dinner, please God!"

Now while I suppose Mrs. Mummer's talk about the lucky sixpence was but a superstition I must confess that, from that day on, I took many a furtive look at it and rubbed my piece until it shone nigh as brightly as a mirror.

But though Mrs. Mummer and little Peg and I kept our faith in Jack's still being alive there were those who thought otherwise, and there was scarce an hour in the day that I was not reminded

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of it. It was plain that Mummer looked upon me as the permanent mistress of Denewood and, although he never referred directly to the subject, matters that heretofore he would have decided himself in John's absence, were brought to me. Even Mrs. Mummer, though she protested mightily that she was firm in her belief that John was not dead, nevertheless put responsibilities upon me that showed a different view.

At Mummer's persistent solicitation I went to see Mr. Chew, as John's letter had instructed, and though I refused absolutely to have the estate settled upon me I believe he took measures to establish my claims in the event of John's never returning. He, too, shared the general belief that Mr. Travers had been killed, but he put nothing in the way of my prosecuting the search and commended my determination not to leave any stone unturned to find him.

But this matter proved not so easy now that I was in America as it had seemed when I was in England. Many months had passed since the battle of the Cowpens, and where was I to begin? I had sent word to Major McLane of my arrival and knew I could depend upon his forwarding

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any effort on my part, but, at the same time, I saw only too clearly that he himself had neglected nothing that was likely to bring the slightest news of him we sought. Realizing that, I could not but wonder what I could do that had not already been attempted and so far without result.

I was relieved to find that Polly and Betty had gone to their home in Haddonfield. It would have been more than I could bear just then to listen to their petty gossip of balls and fashions and to answer their questions about London. But I was glad that Peg had stayed at Denewood. That small and independent person had declared flatly that she would not return until her father came back from the war, and Mrs. Mummer was rejoiced to keep her.

And so time passed while I did nothing but polish my bit of sixpence, and though my heart longed for news of Jack I was glad to be at Denewood, so busy the livelong day that I had little time to mope and most happy to be back in the country I loved.

At length came a letter from Major McLane and I opened it eagerly. Enclosed with it was

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something wrapped in thin paper which I held while I read:

My Dear Miss Bee: I scarce know what interpretation to put upon this which I am sending you. It came into my hands from an old backwoodsman who says he's had it for some months, not being able to reach me sooner, which may well be the truth, for I have not been very accessible. His story as to how he came by it is not quite so credible. However, this is what he says: One day last winter an American officer rushed into his cabin, hotly pursued by a detachment of British horse. The American handed the enclosed to the man with the words, "for Major McLane, Pennsylvania Light Horse," ran on through the house and out at the back in an effort to escape. Whether he was captured or not this man could not say. He heard shots fired a few minutes later in the woods bordering his clearing, but he does not know the outcome. That's the whole of his story and when I pressed him for a description of the officer he could give none, saying that it all happened so suddenly that he had no real sight of him. I scarce know whether to credit this or not, but I could get naught else out of him.

This seems to show that John was not killed at the Cowpens, for it happened some weeks later; on the other hand, if it really were he, of which of course there is doubt, it seems all the more certain that he was killed in his effort to escape. The shots the backwoodsman heard may well have been the fatal ones.

I wish I could hold out some hope to you from this incident but I cannot with conscience, and though I have

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not ceased looking for John, I confess I have little expectation of finding him.

Pray command me for any service that may occur to you and believe me, with affection,

Your obed. humble servant,

ALLAN McLANE.

I opened the paper and drew forth a broken gold chain from which still hung the other half of my lucky sixpence!

I know not how long I gazed at that tiny, broken piece of silver in my palm. It seemed a long time, but I was numb and could not make myself think. I stared at the bit of silver as if I had never seen such a thing before, as if it were a curiosity from a strange land, a something to be wondered at, but without any special significance for me.

At length my senses came back to me and, like a flash, I knew what it all meant. John had sent the bit of sixpence to show that he wanted me, that he needed me, that he was somewhere in the world. Having no other means of communication he had forwarded the bit of sixpence, and I cared not what Allan McLane might think, nor how irrational this belief was when fitted with

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the facts as they were known. I was sure of what it meant and I would lose no time in going to him. My heart was almost light as I flew to tell Mrs. Mummer.

"Look! Look!" I cried, pushing the chain into her hand; "know you not what that is?"

She took it and I expected her face to light up with joy; instead I saw tears filling her eyes.

"Know you not what it is?" I cried again anxiously, for her sad face put a doubt in my mind.

"Aye, that I do!" she answered; "'t is Master John's bit of the lucky sixpence," and a tear rolled down her cheek.

"But know you not what it means?" I asked breathlessly; "he sends it to me as a summons. He wants me to go to him. Is n't it plain, Mrs. Mummer?"

She shook her head sadly.

"Nay, dearie, that is not the meaning," she said. "I wish I could think it, but this takes the last hope from my heart."

"What mean you?" I cried.

"'T is clear," she answered, her voice breaking as she spoke. "Think you, Master John

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would part from this if he were alive? Nay, he would never let it out of his possession and—”

But at that I broke in upon her speech resolved that I would not have my faith shaken.

“That’s true, unless he wanted me,” I insisted. “He does want me and I mean to go to him.”

“Nay, child,” said Mrs. Mummer, “’t is beyond belief, though I wish I could think as you do. And do you not see that Major McLane would have taken your meaning an it were possible?”

“But how could John have sent it if he were dead?” I demanded.

“He did not send it,” she answered; “that’s just it. While he was alive he would n’t have parted with it. That I know! After—who can tell what happened? Perhaps Mark Powell found it upon him or Bill Schmuck and sent it on to let us know the worst, they being, at best, prisoners themselves. Who knows what has taken place? But ’t will help not at all to hold out false hopes.”

I gave her Major McLane’s letter to read, but it only served to strengthen her view. Now, not

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only reason but superstition jumped her way, and she was certain John was dead.

I coaxed her in vain, but truth to tell I cared not so much what she thought as I did to preserve my own belief that the bit of coin had been sent me as a summons. What arguments I put forth were to bolster my own convictions, and when Mrs. Mummer met them all with a sad shake of her head I determined to put an end to controversy, and to act! I had been at Dene-wood a full month and had accomplished nothing.

"Mrs. Mummer," I began, "all you say may be true, but I cannot believe it. I think Jack is a prisoner somewhere and has taken this means of letting us know. I am going to try and find him."

"'T would be but a useless quest, my dear," she answered.

"Nevertheless I mean to take it up," I said, and at that she shook her head sadly and went out of the room to resume her duties.

But when I thought about the matter I found it was not so easy as it looked. Between me and the place where Jack had vanished were two armies, one of friends and one of foes. Major

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McLane was with Colonel Lee in Virginia, or somewhere thereabouts, and so were Bart and his father. The only one whose help would avail, and with whom I might come into touch was his Excellency, General Washington, and though I was not inclined to bother him with my private affairs, knowing how busily he was engaged, nevertheless I would have set him and Congress and all the army on a search for John, an it were possible. So I determined to see General Washington, to lay the matter before him and abide by his decision.

I had supposed that I should be obliged to seek his Excellency near New York, but word was brought to me that he had been in Philadelphia for several days.

At this I resolved to get all things ready for my journey South, stopping in Philadelphia to consult the General; but here I met unexpected opposition.

Mummer and Mrs. Mummer had evidently talked the matter over between themselves and concluded that, so long as there was no immediate prospect of my going, there was no need to oppose my wishes; but the moment I gave orders

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for the carriage to be prepared and told Mrs. Mummer to get ready to accompany me they both began to grumble.

"'T is something of a sudden, Miss Beatrice," said Mummer with an impassive face. "The animals are needed to gather the crops and—"

"Surely there are enough horses," I interrupted.

"But you see, Miss," he went on, "there's Lightfoot's lost a shoe, and the chestnut mare has a strained shoulder—and if you could wait ten days or even a week, Miss, 't would be better."

"Nay. I go to-morrow," I answered.

"Oh, but, Miss Bee!" exclaimed Mrs. Mummer, "'t is impossible, with all the things I have to get ready. Dearie, do not think of it. Give us a little time."

I knew that these objections were all on my account and that their own comfort weighed no whit with them; they believed that I was starting on a hopeless journey and would have spared me the pain of disappointment. But I was in no humor to brook interference and had no mind to stay longer at Denewood doing nothing.

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"Mummer," I said, "I care not if no crops are garnered. I start for Philadelphia in the traveling carriage with two of the best horses on the place. And Mrs. Mummer," I went on, turning to her, "I'm sorry to have to take you away, but I cannot go alone, so you must come."

"'T is impossible," declared Mummer, and I saw by the set of his face that it would take much to move him. "I'm sure Master John would not approve," he added.

"Would it not do a week hence?" pleaded Mrs. Mummer, knowing that with some delay they might work upon me to give up what they thought was a foolish undertaking.

"Enough!" I cried. "You force me to give orders where I would rather make requests, but go I shall. As you insist that I am the mistress of Denewood, see to it that she is obeyed without parley."

They took my meaning and without further argument went to do my bidding.

Of course little Peg was for going too, but Mrs. Mummer who, once she saw that it was useless to try to dissuade me, was the same devoted woman she always had been, comforted Peg who

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was on the verge of tears, by handing her the great bunch of keys she carried.

"You 'll stay here, my pet, and keep the house till we return," and to this arrangement, as suited to her dignity, the young lady agreed.

There was considerable preparation to be made, for we knew we should be gone a long time and should have only ourselves to depend upon, and Mrs. Mummer, though she still insisted that our journey could not bring the joyful termination I predicted, nevertheless took a good stock of things needful for an invalid,—“in case” as she put it. There was no hanging back now, all was ready betimes and the coach with black Peter for driver, and two stout horses which could be ridden to saddle, was at the door.

Mummer was left in charge of Denewood and there were several good women who could be depended upon, so that I was not worried on that account. Indeed I was glad to be gone, for in my heart I was sure we should find him we sought.

"I wish you a successful journey, Miss Beatrice," said Mummer as we were about to start. "I only hope and pray you will not be disappointed."

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"Nay, Mummer," I cried confidently, "when I return I shall bring the master of Denewood with me."

CHAPTER XIX

HIS EXCELLENCY AND MADAME WASHINGTON

UPON our arrival in Philadelphia we learned to my great disappointment that his Excellency, General Washington, had left the city for Chester in company with the French General, the Comte de Rochambeau. I felt keenly the failure to meet him, for it seemed to argue an ill beginning to our search, and I expected Mrs. Mummer to wag her head, repeating her predictions that nothing would come of it; but I did her an injustice in that thought.

"Never mind, dearie," she said cheerfully, "we'll on to Chester to find his Excellency. I have a good friend in that town who will give us shelter."

She was so cheery and heartening that I kissed her.

"You are good to me," I cried, "and I know you hate this traveling about, but—"

HIS EXCELLENCY

"Nay, my dear," she said, patting my hand, "'t was not on our own account that Mummer and I would have kept you at Denewood, but for your own sake. That being decided on, there was naught to do but see that you made your journey safely and fittingly. And be ye mistress of Denewood or not, a cross old servant, named Elizabeth Mummer, would have gone with you willy-nilly."

"Nay, you are not a servant but a friend, Mrs. Mummer," I protested.

"'T is not impossible to be both, my dear," she answered with a smile, "though 't is sweet of you to put it so. But to be a servant is no disgrace. We all serve, Miss Bee,—some at one thing, some at another, but serve we must, and what boots a name so long as we do our duty as well as we are able?"

So Peter was directed to go on to Chester and we settled down for a long ride.

As we entered the town I was surprised to find that it was filled with troops, all dressed in neat and shiny uniforms of white with facings of various colors, which, I learned, served to distinguish the different branches of the service. I had never

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seen any of our French allies before and I could not help making a comparison between the gay character of these French soldiers with their neat regimentals and our own men who were remarkable for quickness, silence and, alas, for rags.

Then too, I wondered that such speckless cleanliness could be maintained upon the march over dusty roads and in all kinds of weather, but I discovered that the French put on old clothes as soon as they left a town or city. Another thing I heard of them which I thought was fine, after knowing something of how the Hessians acted, was the fact that the French, rank and file alike, were so scrupulously honest that they never took even an apple without offering payment.

We found Mrs. Mummer's friend, a Mrs. Chitters, whose husband was a cooper owning a neat little house in the town, and she made us welcome with a right good will. She would have had us stop and rest, while she and Mrs. Mummer talked together; but I was impatient to be out, having a lively interest in this great mass of troops. Mrs. Mummer hummed and hawed a little about going among them, but when I pointed out that

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perchance we might come upon some news of John she said no further word in protest.

As we went down the clean, narrow street our ears were greeted with volleys of cheers, and so clamorous was the sound that Mrs. Mummer drew up with a jerk.

"We 'd best go no further, Miss Bee," she said.

"Nay, there is naught to be afraid of," I answered; "'t is some good news, I doubt not, and I mean to know what it is."

I hurried her forward at such a rate that she had no chance to hold back and we soon came to the French troops.

I asked one of them in rather halting French the meaning of the cheers and he, evidently surprised and delighted to hear his own language, gave me the information I sought most volubly and politely.

It appeared that Lafayette and Mad Anthony Wayne had trapped the British army under Cornwallis in the little village of York, in Virginia. This town is situated on a peninsula not more than five miles wide, lying between the rivers James and York, about twelve miles from where the latter stream empties into Chesapeake Bay.

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The only means of escape for Cornwallis was by water, and news had just come that this retreat was cut off by a French fleet under De Grasse which commanded the Chesapeake. All that was left for the British to do was to fortify Yorktown and prepare for a siege by Washington and our allies.

It was an achievement that might well bring forth cheers, for with Cornwallis's army shut up in the South, King George was no nearer holding the Colonies than he had been three years before, when Clinton had retired from Philadelphia to take up the position he still occupied in New York. Indeed, they were in no better case than they had been at the beginning of the war, the only difference being that they held New York instead of Boston town.

"And so, Mademoiselle," my French trooper went on enthusiastically, "we await the debarcation of their Excellencies, General Washington and the Comte de Rochambeau," and he rolled out the last name with gusto.

"And then?" I asked.

"Then, Mademoiselle," he answered, standing up to his full height, "then we march to reinforce

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the Marquis de Lafayette and—" he shrugged, "behold the dénouement! Do you wonder that we cheer?"

I did not wonder, but all other considerations were swallowed up in my desire to see General Washington.

"And where will their Excellencies arrive?" I asked.

"The landing-stage is at the foot of this street," he answered, "but I fear Mademoiselle will find it difficult to reach."

"Nevertheless, I shall try," I replied, and with a few words of thanks for his information, I was soon pushing and edging my way in the crowd which had gathered to see the allied armies.

At last the press became so great that I could make no further progress and Mrs. Mummer was in despair.

"This will never do!" I cried out in my vexation. "I might as well be at home in Germantown. I will never see his Excellency here."

"Now that 's true enough," said a brawny man, who was standing in front of me, in a loud voice, "and if you have come all that way 't would be a

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pity to miss him. Follow me, Mistress, and we'll try if we can reach him."

He began at once to shove this way and that, not roughly so as to arouse anger, but with a pleasant word and a smile for those he elbowed, and every now and then he would bawl lustily at the top of his great voice: "Way! Way! for a lady who has traveled far with a message for his Excellency. Way! Way!"

His voice was so big and his smile so winning that the crowd gave back, and following his great shoulders, Mrs. Mummer and I went on, until at length we found ourselves suddenly cast forth, so to speak, in the open space before the landing-stage, and our good friend, as if announcing our arrival at a Court function, gave a final shout:

"A lady with a message for his Excellency, General Washington!"

At the same moment a boat drew up at the stage and a tall gentleman stepped lightly from it and, waving aside the officer who stood there to receive him, came directly up to me.

"Is it you who wish to see me?" he asked courteously.

"Oh, your Excellency!" I exclaimed, pushing

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back my calash so that he might recognize me, "I am in much trouble."

"'T is Mistress Beatrice Travers," he said, his face lighting up; "I thought you were in England. Have you perchance brought me more news of the French?" he asked eagerly, and added, "I think this good man said you had a message for me"; whereat my big escort knuckled his forehead, vastly pleased to be noticed.

"Nay, I 'm from Germantown and have no message this time," I answered, at which his face fell mightily, and he sighed.

"I fear I gave way to a superstitious weakness," he said, with a little drop in his voice, which was the more remarkable, seeing that nothing ordinarily seemed to move him out of his calm. "When I saw you, Mistress Beatrice," he went on, "I remembered a letter you brought from France in a time of stress and doubt, and though there was no reason why I should have thought so, I hoped you had word of the French fleet which I—"

"Your Excellency," I interrupted, clasping my hands in excitement, "know you not that De Grasse is in the Chesapeake?"

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"Is it true?" he cried in a loud voice, his eyes blazing, the calm and dignified general we all knew fast disappearing.

"Aye, your Excellency, 't is true, every one here knows it."

But I was talking to the empty air, his Excellency, General George Washington, Commander in Chief of all the armies in America, had thrown up his hat and was shouting like a boy. He ran to the edge of the landing and began to wave frantically to another boat that was bringing General Rochambeau across the river. For a full minute our General jumped about and waved his arms, crying the joyful news till those ashore joined in the cheer and the shouts echoed and re-echoed across the waters. It was said on good authority that the Comte de Rochambeau, seeing General Washington capering on the shore like a boy, thought for sure that his Excellency had gone mad, as well he might; but when people tell me that story I always answer them that the Count himself, whatever he may have thought of Washington, was scarce less moved when he was told the news. And they had cause for rejoicing; but sure it was a strange sight to see General

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Washington stirred from the calm which was his habit.

"And there is the maid who gave me the word!" cried the General, as he brought the Comte de Rochambeau up to me.

"Mademoiselle was born under a lucky star," said the Count, kissing my hand; and Mrs. Mummer, dropping her curtsey, nodded her head emphatically.

The two great men drew off for a time, the General begging me to hold them excused for a moment, but in a little while he came back to me.

"And now what service can I render you, Mistress Beatrice," he asked, "for you have brought news that has gladdened my heart more than tongue can tell and I owed you much already."

"I have set out to find John Travers," I answered, and at the words his face fell into lines of sympathy and sorrow. "I know 't is thought that he is dead, your Excellency," I went on, "but I cannot believe it, so I have come to ask you what I ought to do."

He stood silent a while, looking down at me with grave eyes.

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"I have mourned John Travers as dead," he said finally. "He was a gallant officer and a great favorite of Madame Washington's. Do I understand that you have heard he is alive?"

"Nay, we have heard naught," I answered, "and every one, save little Peggy Travers, has bidden me stay at home and take over the estates. No one else will believe that he is not dead. And so, knowing that I must search for him, I came to ask you how I should proceed."

"And how does it come that you are so sure?" he asked in a kindly tone.

"Because the half of a sixpence he wore has come back to me," I replied readily. "I gave it to him, thinking it lucky,—and I wear the other half. Some say that this return shows he is dead but I know that he has sent the token as a message for me to come to him."

"And have you no other reason for believing he is alive?" asked the General soberly.

"Yes, oh, yes!" I cried, as if there could be no doubt, "my heart tells me!" And he looked at me a moment but said no word further of that.

"And what can I do?" was his next question.

"I thought perhaps you might tell me whether

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a girl should go upon such a search," I replied. "All those in Philadelphia have advised against it, and I am so alone that I scarce know what to do."

He meditated for a time and then slowly nodded his head up and down as if he had found the solution of a matter not easy to determine.

"My dear Miss Beatrice," he said gently, "I can and will give you passes through our lines and a safe-conduct that will assure your protection wherever the American forces lie. That I will gladly do. But as to your going, I am but a rough soldier and, in a matter of hearts, I know one who can advise you better than I or any other. Go to Madame Washington and tell her. She will know what is best."

"I had thought to go to Major McLane," I murmured, half protestingly, for I remembered that it was Madame Washington who had advised Jack to send me to England and I bore her a little grudge on that account.

"Mount Vernon will not be much out of your road particularly as you will find all the boats on the Elk and at Baltimore engaged with the army," he said. "Go to Madame Washington, **Mistress**

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Beatrice, and be assured you will find sympathy and understanding. A night there will scarce halt your search. I would bid you come with me, for I go there now for the first time in six years, but the Count accompanies me and we shall be obliged to ride too fast for a lady. Will you go?" he ended.

"Yes, gladly, your Excellency," I answered.

He asked where I was stopping and, calling an aide, gave directions that certain papers be made out for my safe conduct; then he turned to say good-by to me.

"God prosper your search, Miss Beatrice. Such faith as yours deserves reward," and taking my hand for a moment, he bowed over it. Then I turned back into the town.

I met with naught but kindness on my way to Mount Vernon, and so pleasant were the people with whom we came in contact, and so beautiful were some of the places through which we passed that even Mrs. Mummer consented to praise them, though there was the never failing remark at the end that "nothing compared to Denewood."

Mount Vernon itself was a very noble residence, and (here I but repeat Mrs. Mummer)

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except for Denewood, the finest mansion I had seen in America. It stood on a natural terrace overlooking a river which I think is called the Potomac and in this it certainly surpasses our estate in Germantown, for we lack the water. The great expanse of fertile land would, I am sure, have delighted Mummer, who was at heart a farmer; but, though 't was splendid, I like a more rugged landscape.

His Excellency had given warning of my coming and Madame Washington was at the door to welcome me as we drove slowly up to the mansion. She embraced me with a wholesome friendliness that made me at home at once, and had a kindly word for Mrs. Mummer who vowed ever afterward that she was the best housekeeper in the land, than which she had no higher praise.

Madame Washington was a very dignified little lady, with naturally white hair that needed no powder. She was plump and might have seemed insignificant, had she not carried herself with a certain majesty that compelled respect and admiration in spite of her short stature.

To me she was all tenderness, listening to what

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I had to tell her with sympathy and understanding, as the General had told me she would.

"I wish that I could keep you with me, child," she said at the end, "but I myself am wont to hear the first and last guns of every campaign, and I know too well the horror of sitting still and doing nothing. We women have no easy part to play in war."

"And you do not think I am a foolish maid to undertake this search?" I asked, a little tremulously, for though I meant to go, whether or no, I did crave the encouragement that would come from the approbation of an older woman.

"Nay, my child," she answered heartily, "I urge you to go, for until we know to a certainty just what has happened, the promptings of your heart are as likely to be right as the reasonings of those who have no more information than you. 'T would not be an unheard-of thing for Jack Travers to return to us well and hearty. Indeed I have known of many cases during wars where men given up for lost have come back after years of absence. No, my dear, I would not think of staying you, and the General sees no reason to believe that you will not be as safe with the army as you would be in your own Denewood."

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"Oh, thank you! thank you!" I cried, tears filling my eyes. "Now I can forgive you for having advised Jack to send me to England."

The words popped out before I thought and for a moment I looked to see Madame Washington show offense, but she smiled the sunniest of smiles and I knew my indiscretion was overlooked.

"I thought perhaps you would bear me some ill-will for that," she said gaily. "Ah well, my dear, you are a child still, but some day you will understand why I told John Travers that 't was his duty to send you to England. I think I am not betraying a confidence when I say that he wanted to keep you and argued valiantly against my advice after he had sought it: which you will find is the way of men. However, that you are here to-day proves that we were both right."

On the morrow I was sped upon my way with equal kindness.

"Here is a little note which you will do me the favor to deliver to Mr. Washington when you come upon him at Yorktown," said Madame Washington. "You will find lunch in the basket."

She kissed me heartily as I was stepping into the carriage. "If you should see an opportunity,

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my dear," she added, "kindly remind Mr. Washington for me that he should spare himself when it is possible. Some day you will know that the greatest of men are but babies about most matters and need all the care their women-folk can give them," she ended with her head on one side regarding me with a wise little smile upon her lips.

"Oh, Madame Washington," I answered eagerly, "I know that already! Were it not for me there are all manner of foolish things Jack would do. He is quite careless about himself in matters of health and such-like."

"Mercy me!" she exclaimed. "If you've learned that so soon perchance I was wrong when I sent you off to Europe, but 't is too late now to mend that. Come back to me on your return, my child, and I pray you may have Mr. Travers with you."

She waved her hand to me as we drove away and I watched her for as long as she was in sight, standing on the piazza of the mansion between the tall columns before the entrance. I wish I could have thanked her adequately for the courage her words had given me and for the light heart I took with me as I proceeded on my journey.

CHAPTER XX

A BROKEN BARGAIN

IT was plain to any one who traveled that part of the country in the year of our Lord 1781 that some great event was going forward. All roads seemed to be leading toward Yorktown and every one of them was filled with soldiers all hurrying on with gay shouts and prophecies of victory.

And I, too, hurried on; but I confess that I was less interested in the war than I was in finding Allan McLane and learning if he had any word of John.

At last I overtook him, leading his troop out of Williamsburg where he had been stationed,—a huge man, astride a great horse, towering above those around him.

It was with some little difficulty that we got the coach near to him, but when I leaned out and called he reined up with a cry of welcome.

"Mistress Bee!" he exclaimed, "I had a special

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despatch from his Excellency telling me that I might expect you but I did not look for you till to-morrow."

"And have you any news of John?" I cried, for I could not wait to be decently civil, though I counted on this good friend to understand my anxiety and excuse my lack of manners.

"Aye," he answered, "I have a slight clue, but," he went on, "do not count on it, my child, 't is but a rumor and proves nothing."

"Is he alive?" I asked, all trembling for his answer.

"Nay, I know not," he replied, "but wait until we come into the camp and I will tell you the story."

It was impossible to talk with any satisfaction there on the road so I was forced to curb my impatience till we could be a little more private.

Like the thoughtful man he was, Major McLane had secured a small house near the fork of the roads at Halfway and installed himself there with us, saying, when he greeted Mrs. Mummer, that having such a good housekeeper at his command he did not propose to live in a tent. Though he thus joked of the matter, I knew well

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that it was on our account that he made these arrangements and stayed near us for our protection.

But I did not wait to settle the small establishment ere I again begged him for the news he had of John.

"Do not count on it," he began, "for 't is but a rumor, and not even of Jack but of Bill Schmuck. It came to me a day or two ago from a man who had seen some fighting in the northern part of Carolina. I looked him up and asked him of John's disappearance but he knew naught of him. Then I was led to speak of Bill and Mark Powell neither of whom have been heard from and my man at once remembered talk of such a long lank, gangling fellow at a little place called Salem, a Moravian settlement in North Carolina. Being pressed he recalled that something was said of a sick friend of this youth's, but further than that he knew naught. It is my intention to send to Salem, but just now we are so engaged with Cornwallis that there is not a man to be spared."

"You think it was Bill Schmuck and John?" I asked.

"I do not know," he answered, "but it might be,

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and I would take heart if the rumor were verified."

"I start for Salem to-morrow," I said.

"Nay," he began, but seeing the resolution in my face he stopped his protest. "'T will be impossible in that great carriage of yours," he warned me. "You will have to ride horseback."

"But Mrs. Mummer—" I began, when that gallant woman cut me short.

"I can ride an I must," she put in, "and though I will make a sorry figure, I would crawl on my hands and knees to have news of Master John."

We started early the next day, Mrs. Mummer and I upon our own horses, which had been selected to go under saddle as well as to draw the carriage, and Peter upon a beast lent by Major McLane who assured us that though the way might be rough we would be in a friendly country and could trust to the British staying penned up in Yorktown.

It was a journey of many days there and back and poor Mrs. Mummer suffered so severely from her unaccustomed mode of traveling that she took to her bed for a day or two when at last we returned; but the good ~~woman~~ made no complaint,

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and vowed the information we obtained was worth the journey.

Of that I was not so sure nor was Major McLane, though we established beyond doubt that Bill Schmuck and a sick man, who could be none other than John, had stayed in the village among the Moravians near three months, at the end of which time they had departed. The wounded man seemed well recovered and though he was dressed like a common soldier, the belief was general that he was an officer. Indeed, the description of him fitted Jack in all things.

"At least we know he was alive in the early spring," I ended my account of the trip to Major McLane. "That is something."

"Aye," he answered, with a wrinkled brow, "but where has he been since? That's what puzzles me, for had he died from a fresh opening of his wound, Bill Schmuck would have come in ere this. If he was still too ill to travel he certainly would have been able to send word to us now that the country is cleared of the enemy. And then, where is Mark Powell?"

"What can have happened?" I cried, "for I am more than ever sure he is not dead."

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"There is only one explanation that I can think of," McLane answered, "and that is this. After John recovered, on trying to rejoin us, he was captured by the British and has since been held a prisoner. That's the only solution I can see unless all three are dead."

"And if he were a prisoner, where would he be?" I demanded.

"In Yorktown," he answered, pointing in the direction of the fortifications. "If he's in the hands of the British, he's there."

"But would they not have let us know they had him and offer him in exchange for one of their own men?" I objected. "Surely by this time we would have heard something of him if he were a prisoner."

"That's true," Major McLane agreed; "it's for that reason that I cannot believe he's there."

"If he were in Yorktown how could we get him out?" I asked, for I thought of naught but John and my great desire to see him.

"It would be impossible to get him out now," Major McLane replied. "We are not dealing with a man like Howe. Cornwallis is awake, his guards are well posted and he is splendidly forti-

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fied. But we won't have to wait long. 'T is not the General's intention to sit and starve them. Our parallels are completed and we'll soon be pounding the place down about their ears."

"You mean to tell me that you will open fire on the town, not knowing whether John is there or not?" I cried aghast.

"Why—why—" he began, but evidently this thought had never occurred to him, "what else can we do?"

"I do not know," I answered, "but I think war is a wicked, cruel thing!"

"Aye, and that 's true too, Miss Bee," he answered soberly, "but 't is a stubborn King that has forced it upon us, and—"

"I care naught for the King nor for the Colonies!" I cried, nearly beside myself with worry and anxiety. "I want John Travers. He is more to me than all England and America together," and I went away rather than have him see me cry.

Nevertheless, in spite of what a maid might or might not wish, the destruction of Yorktown was begun and from then until the parleys the din of the guns in our ears was incessant as shot after

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shot was thrown into the town and fortifications.

The curious thing was that we soon became quite used to the roaring of the cannon and when it happened once or twice that they stopped for a little while it seemed so strangely quiet that one felt as if something ominous, like an earthquake perhaps, was about to occur.

On the night of October tenth, a French battery, firing red-hot shot, set on fire the British frigate *Charon* and three large transports. Many people went out to see the sight and I, with Mrs. Mummer and our black man Peter, went too. We took our station on the bluffs overlooking the water so that we had a fine view of the York River, and the burning ships made a wonderful picture. They were several miles away from us, yet they seemed much nearer, and the four vessels glowed before our eyes like some huge firework, every rope and spar glittering with flame, while now and then great shells exploded in the air with a shower of sparks.

We watched the spectacle for an hour or more and though I thought how unfortunate it was that so much property should be destroyed, yet it seemed so unreal that it had the effect of having

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been produced for our enjoyment, like a pageant created only to be admired and then to disappear.

That night was the first time I had been out to this bluff, though it was rather a favorite point for those noncombatants who lived near; and the next afternoon I returned to see the view by daylight. The outlook from there was very beautiful and often thereafter I would ride out and sit for a little while.

Sometimes Mrs. Mummer accompanied me but Peter always went, for he was trustworthy, and, though there seemed no great need of it, both Allan McLane and Mrs. Mummer were better satisfied that I should not go alone.

Thus it came about that on the afternoon of the eighteenth of October Peter and I were there and I enjoyed it more than I had ever done, because for a day now there had been no firing of the great cannon and it seemed so peaceful that one would not think war was near us.

There had been many rumors as to why the firing had ceased, some saying that Cornwallis has asked a parley and that he was about to surrender, others that it was but a trick and that he hoped to gain time for reinforcements to come

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from Clinton; and indeed there seemed likely to be much truth in that, for some time before British vessels had been seen outside Chesapeake Bay and we had heard of an engagement between them and the French who were cutting off the British escape by water. I had not seen Allan McLane for a day or two, so I knew not what foundation there was for all these tales; but so often there had been similar stories that I thought but little of them now.

So I sat my horse, gazing out across the river toward the little town of Gloucester, glad of the peace and quiet after these days of thundering cannon, thinking little of the war and much of John Travers.

I had come South to find him and I looked toward Yorktown, wondering for the thousandth time if he could be there.

As I sat, Peter pushed his horse close to mine.

"Miss Bee," he whispered, "they is a man in them bushes, and he's got an eye on us folks."

I turned in the direction indicated and there, sure enough, was the figure of a man crouched behind some bushes! I could n't distinguish his

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face for the shadows but I could see the glitter of his eyes as they glanced back at us.

I was about to tell Peter that we would go away at once, when the man parted the leaves and came toward me.

"Well met, Miss Travers," he said blandly, and as he continued to approach I saw that it was no other than Captain Blundell.

"Stay where you are," I cried, reining back my horse; "I wish to have naught to do with you."

"Now that is hardly generous," he returned, though he halted nevertheless, "for I meant to ask a favor of you."

"And you expected that I would grant it?" I asked, dumbfounded at the man's audacity. "After playing the highwayman?"

"Ah, so you saw my face," he said coolly. "I thought as much and expected that hot-headed brother of yours after me with a naked sword; but, though I should have been glad to cross blades with him, I was forced to leave England the next day. Perchance in the future we may have a meeting."

"Nay, my brother does not fight with highwaymen," I answered, "and further—," I added,

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meaning to pique him if I could, "I thought it not worth while to tell him."

"Nevertheless, Miss Travers, I beg that you will lend me your servant's horse," he replied. " 'T is an urgent matter with me."

"I do not understand," I said.

" 'T is simple enough," he explained. "Yorktown is doomed and what use could one man be? I am taking my chance of escaping rather than be made a prisoner—and I tell you I'll have a horse, whether you will or no," and he took a step toward me.

"Your pistol, Peter," I cried.

"It am pointin' right at him, Miss Bee," answered Peter. "You say de word and I'll blow his head clean offen him."

Blundell stopped short, and his face drew into the snarl of a beaten dog.

"Then I'll be off a-foot," he said, and saluted me with a bow.

"Nay, you'll march with me to Major McLane and see how it feels to be a spy," I retorted. "You are not in uniform and you are a British officer within our lines. I think the matter plain enough to any one."

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He hung his head for a minute and I confess to feeling glad that at length I was to have my turn with this man who was my enemy; but I did not know him nor his resources.

"Very well," he said defiantly. "Lead on and have me shot for a spy, but—" he paused significantly, "what then becomes of John Travers?"

"John Travers!" I gasped. "John Travers! What do you know of him?"

"Everything," he replied with a laugh. "Shall we go to Major McLane?" and he took a step in the direction of the road.

"Then he is alive?" I cried, thinking of naught but this glorious news.

"Oh, yes, he's alive—now," he replied, giving the last word extra emphasis.

That brought me to my senses, for I felt this man capable of anything.

"Where is he?" I asked, scarce able to contain myself.

"Now that's another matter," he answered stepping back, and facing me with a forced smile. "Shall we go on to the American camp?"

"Nay," I replied quickly, "if you will tell me where Mr. Travers is, I will let you go."

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At that he threw back his head and laughed aloud.

"Will you, indeed?" he cried between his bursts of mirth. "Now that's vastly generous of you, but I shall not take advantage of your awkward position. Let us go on and have the matter settled."

It was plain the man had me in his grip. There was nothing I would not have given him for word of John and he knew it well enough.

"What is it that you want?" I asked, after a moment's thought, for I saw that it was useless to pretend a power over him which could be maintained only at Jack's expense.

He stood a while in deep thought.

"The question resolves itself into just this, Miss Travers," he began, and I knew from the seriousness of his tone that he was in earnest. "I am a ruined man. I owe more than I can pay and unless I can get money, and a good deal of money at that, I cannot go back to England. Now there is a certain treasure hidden in this land which I mean to have, make no doubt of that! I have been on the track of it for nigh four years and now that it is within my grasp be well assured I

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shall not let it slip. It is the location of that treasure that I want and, unless I get it, John Travers is as good as dead."

"I do not understand," I said, as he paused and looked at me significantly.

"'T is plain enough," he burst out impatiently. "Some boy relative of yours, by the most unheard-of luck, found the thing I 'm searching for. 'T was stolen from Varnum in Philadelphia, and it was to recover it that both he and I allowed ourselves to be captured when Clinton left there. We need not go into details of the matter. We know that it came into your possession."

"What are you talking about?" for I still had not the faintest notion of his meaning.

"Oh, have done with this pretense of ignorance," he cried in a rage. "'T is the map I want and I will have it. Think you I have risked so much to be balked by a slip of a maid? You had the map. That I know through Schmuck, the fellow called the magus. Your rooms were searched and nothing found. Then Travers's rooms were ransacked with like results. In England I stopped you on the road to seek the map, yet found it not. I sought out your silly Cousin Polly

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and was bored nigh to extinction, but from what she told me I concluded John Travers knew where it was. Well, now I have him and though he is a stubborn, stiff-necked rebel and declares he knows naught of it, 't is in my mind he will tell ere I 've finished with him."

At last I knew, and my heart leaped with joy to think that after all I had in my possession the means to release John.

"I have the map," I said, trying to speak calmly.

"You!" he cried in surprise.

"Aye," I replied, "is it so valuable?"

"It will lead to immense treasure," he said eagerly. "Varnum says 't is not a pound less than a million sterling."

"And whose treasure was it?" I demanded.

"That I care not," he replied. "Varnum said it was a pirate hoard and how he came by his knowledge is too long a story to recount here. Enough of this. Let us get to the business in hand. 'T is simple, I think, and can be quickly stated. I want the map. You want Mr. Travers. Can we strike a bargain?"

"Can I trust you?" I asked. "If I give you the map will you tell me where John is?"

A BROKEN BARGAIN

"'T is not a compliment you pay me, Miss Travers," he replied, "but we will let that pass. Though you cannot trust me I am quite ready to trust you. Give me your word that you will hand me over the map at once and I will tell you where the prisoner John Travers may be found. You see I have every confidence in you."

"I shall have to go and fetch the map," I answered. "It will not take long, however."

"I will wait," he returned, and I prepared to ride back to seek the little book of maxims with the map hidden in it.

"There's something queer about it," I said hesitatingly, "there is only part of it and—and—"

"'T will be enough," he answered, plainly eager to get it into his possession, "only bring me what you have and I'll translate it, never fear."

He promised again to wait and I had no doubt that he would, his intense desire for the map was so apparent. The possibility of having it after all these years of search making him chafe at all delays.

"Hurry!" were his last words to me, but I needed no urging and Peter and I tore at top speed down the lane to Halfway.

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I wasted no time in securing the little book and was soon on the road again racing back, for, though I was sure Blundell would not go, I feared a trick and was on fire to know Jack's whereabouts.

One happy thought sang in my brain. Now at last I was assured he was alive. That knowledge was worth many, many maps to me. Indeed all the treasure in the world would not count for a moment against having Jack back again.

Blundell was there, ready and eager, when Peter and I drew up on the bluff and though the sun had sunk below the horizon there was still plenty of light.

"You've made good time," he said. "Let me have the map quickly for I must be on my way."

I dismounted, giving the bridle of my horse to Peter, who hitched it over the horn of his saddle so that he might have a hand free to aim his pistol which he still kept in evidence, though I no longer felt any fear of Blundell.

"Now tell me where I can find Mr. Travers and you shall have your map," I said.

He pointed down the river to Yorktown.

A BROKEN BARGAIN

"He is listed among the American prisoners there," he replied with a smile.

"But he's alive?" I questioned hurriedly, for his answer seemed not quite straightforward.

"Oh, yes, I assured you of that," he returned instantly without hesitation. "He is entirely well, though somewhat pale from living in a cave out of the way of your rebel roundshot."

"And you think he'll be exchanged and—" but he broke in upon my anxious question.

"Nay, that was not part of the bargain," he interrupted. "But when you hand me the map perhaps I will be generous and give you further news of him."

"Agreed!" I answered readily, and I took the book and began to break the stitches of the embroidered covers.

"Is it really there?" he exclaimed. "I think I remember having had that little book in my hands when the highwayman stopped your post-chaise."

"'T is the same book," I told him, and by this time I had opened the cover and had taken out the pieces of silvered paper.

"Here," I said, thrusting them into his out-

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stretched hand, "this is all I have, but it must be what you seek."

He snatched at them and turned them over, and as he looked at the white side of the paper his brow contracted into a scowl.

"You are pleased to have your jest, Mistress Travers," he said in a voice of suppressed suspicion and rage. "Give me the map. This is no time for pleasant foolings," and he held the silvered paper out to me.

"I told you I had but a portion of it," I replied.

"Then give it me," he snapped.

"But you have it there," I answered, indicating the paper he still held toward me.

"Here!" he cried wrathfully, "there is naught here!"

"Oh, yes," I said with assurance. "I will show you," and taking the papers out of his hand I turned over the piece upon which I had seen the drawing with the intention of pointing it out to him.

With a little cry of amazement I looked and found both of them blank. There was no sign of any map upon either of the white surfaces.

CHAPTER XXI

HIS LORDSHIP, CHARLES CORNWALLIS

I TURNED the silvered paper over and over in my hands hunting for the drawing that had been there but was there no longer, and all the while Blundell stood silent looking at me. At length he spoke.

"When you have done with this fooling, perhaps you will give me the map," he said, in a harsh voice.

"Indeed," I answered, "it was here when last I saw it, and I cannot account—"

"Oh, have done! have done!" he cried out in so angry a tone that I shrank back to be nearer Peter, who muttered something and pointed his pistol, whereat Blundell controlled himself with an effort and went on more calmly:

"You gave me your word and I trusted you. Now let me have what I seek, for I cannot believe that you meant to deceive me."

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"In truth I did not," I answered. "I am as much amazed as you. I thought I had it here, but I have no other map."

He gazed at me in silence for a time trying to make up his mind whether or not to believe me. Then he snatched the papers out of my hand and looked at them closely again, holding them up to the fast-fading light in the west and finally threw them at my feet.

"Tricked!" he cried out. "Tricked by a girl! But it will do you little good, my lady, and though you've broken your word I'll do more than I promised. Here's information that you no doubt will be glad to have. The prisoner, John Travers, knowing the uncertainty of his time on this earth, planned to escape this very night and had secured a boat for that purpose. Knowledge of this came to me, and, seeing that I was in somewhat urgent need of leaving Yorktown, I took the boat he was kind enough to provide. He will look in vain for it, and being recaptured, his attempt will serve as an admirable excuse to hang him. There, Miss, is more information than you bargained for, I warrant. Another time you will do well not to match your wits

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against mine. As for the map I'll have it or some one will suffer. Trust me for that. And now, good day to you, Mistress Beatrice Travers. I wish you pleasing thoughts while you look toward Yorktown. Belike, if you take a spyglass early to-morrow morning, you may see a gallows."

He moved as if to seize one of the horses, but seeing Peter's pistol leveled resolutely at him he turned away and in a moment disappeared in the fast gathering gloom.

As for me, I picked up the bits of silvered paper, only half conscious of what I did. It was as if I dreamed. Mechanically I tucked them under the silk cover and, handing all to Peter, mounted my horse, still dazed by the events that had just passed.

It was only when I had actually started on the way back that a full realization of what Blundell had told came to me. In an instant I had forgotten all about the map and its strange disappearance and pulled up my horse. "They will hang him!" I murmured, for it was only too plain that if John were captured in an attempt to escape he would be given short shrift by men like

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Tarleton. And he must be caught, for Blundell had taken his boat.

Little wonder that I stopped, appalled at the thought. I had learned that John was alive, only to discover at the same time that he was in imminent danger of dying a disgraceful death.

"Blundell has taken his boat!" I kept repeating to myself, as if the words had some meaning that I could not grasp, and then, like a flash of inspiration, came the apparent solution of the difficulty. I must take the boat back so that he might find it and escape as he had planned.

The matter seemed so clear and straightforward to me that I halted Peter at once.

"We return to the bluff," I said, and wheeled my horse.

Arriving there I dismounted and scrambled down to the water's edge to find, as I had hoped, a boat drawn up on the shore near to the place where we had first seen Blundell.

Back I went to Peter to give my orders.

"Go to Major McLane and tell him that Mr. John is a prisoner in Yorktown and that I have gone to him," I said briefly, and though he would have protested I cut short his expostulations.

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"Go!" I told him, "'t is a matter of life and death," and that ended all controversy.

I released the riding skirt which I had worn for protection over my dress and threw it across the saddle of my horse. Peter now offered to go in my stead, but this was not an undertaking to trust to a black slave, no matter how willing and brave he might be.

I scrambled down the bluff again and in a moment or two was on the river.

With the wind and current in my favor I made good time and, as I tugged at the oars, I thought of nothing but the necessity for haste, nor heeded blistering palms.

Nearing Yorktown, the river narrowed till it was scarce a mile wide, and as I looked over my shoulder I saw the dim outlines of a number of vessels that I judged must be British ships penned in by the French fleet lying outside the mouth of the York River.

Fearing that I might be discovered I headed toward the shore and began to think of where I should make a landing.

It was then that I suddenly realized that I had no knowledge of the place where John had

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planned to take the boat, which might be any point for a mile or more along the shore.

How can I describe the despair I felt at that moment? What use was the boat to Jack if he did n't know where to find it? I wracked my brains to discover a way out of this terrible dilemma, for it was no trivial problem I puzzled over but a matter of life and death.

At length, out of the tangle of my distraught thoughts, came a plan which held some chance of success. If I arrived in time I might give John warning that his boat had been taken and so spare him the danger of being caught as an escaping prisoner.

To this end I determined to go boldly into the town and obtain an interview with him, even if I had to brave Cornwallis himself. Nay, as I thought more of the matter—and now I was rowing furiously toward the town—it seemed to me that it was my best plan to go to the supreme authority at once and so save delay.

I landed at the foot of the bluff, which showed black and forbidding with its surmounting batteries and took my way up the embankment and on into the town.

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I had expected to be challenged the moment I set foot upon the shore, but no one stopped me though there were a number of people moving about hurriedly. Lights began to show here and there, as I entered the street, and I saw in what a sad state the town was.

It was only a village of some fifty or sixty houses, but on all sides there were evidences of the destruction wrought by our bursting shells and cannon balls. Everywhere were piles of stone and bricks, rent from the houses which showed great black holes in their walls. Chimneys had been knocked down, roofs torn off or burned, trees uprooted, and ruin and desolation stared me in the face. It was pitiable to see, though the darkness hid much of the devastation.

I walked on, hoping at every step to be challenged, and at length the order came.

"Halt!" and I stopped before a grenadier with leveled musket.

"I am come to see Lord Cornwallis," I said in as commanding a voice as I could assume. "I have urgent business with him."

The grenadier grunted skeptically, but lowered his musket, seeing I was but a maid.

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"Where have you come from?" he demanded.

"From up the river," I answered truthfully, but sure they would not believe me.

"Humph!" he grunted, "what's your news?"

"Nay, 't is not for you," I answered, "nor will it serve you to keep me standing here. I must see his Lordship without delay. It is a matter of life and death."

By this, another grenadier had come up and after a moment's discussion it was decided that I should be taken to headquarters.

"Is his Lordship still in his cave?" asked my challenger, with a sneer.

"Nay, since the firing stopped he's back in what's left of the Nelson house," said the other, and with that we went further into the little town.

I found the same ruin everywhere but I paid scant heed, and at length we came to a house showing damage from the shells, to be sure, but not uninhabitable now that the bombardment had ceased, and of good dimensions.

Here we were both stopped and my guard, explaining the matter, went back to his post and left me to battle with another sentry and to go

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over again my urgent demands to see his Lordship.

Convincing the man at length that my business was urgent, I was permitted to go a step further, which carried me just inside the house. Here I was met by an officer to whom the story was retold once more.

This gentleman shook his head.

"I regret to refuse you, Mistress," he said, "but 't is worth my life to disturb him now. He's in a furious temper, as well he may be, and none of us dare go near him."

"I dare," I answered, for with all this delay my anxiety had become extreme and these wasted minutes might be fatal.

"Tell me where he can be found for I must see him. As I said it is a matter of life and death."

The officer, noting the earnestness of my manner, softened a little but still shook his head dubiously.

"I do not dare," he murmured under his breath, "but," he went on, "if you should find your way to the door at the head of the stairs,—and there is no one to stop you once you pass here,—you would find his Lordship within and alone."

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And with that to my great surprise he bowed and left me abruptly.

His meaning was plain enough and I lost no time in putting his suggestion into effect. In a moment I had crossed the hall and was climbing the steps.

As I reached the landing above I was in no doubt about which door was the right one, for I heard the sound of heavy footsteps tramping back and forth and now and then the spoken words of a man somewhat distraught.

I paused at the door with my hand raised to knock, when the voice inside was lifted to a loud pitch.

"He gave me two hours, the rebel!" came the words punctuated with the steady tramp, tramp, as he walked up and down the room. "Two hours or be blown to bits! And Clinton sits idle in New York. Oh, fool, fool, that I was to heed him! But I'll never hand my sword to a rebel. Never! Never!"

I waited no longer but gave the door a right good thump. The pacing to and fro stopped and in the silence I knocked again.

"Oh, give me peace, peace!" came the cry, in

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a furious voice. "Go away and give me peace! I can do naught for any one in this land." I heard a chair grate on the floor and the sound of a heavy man seating himself, and, not without some fear, I pushed the door open and entered the room.

Cornwallis was seated at a table, the picture of intense dejection, his head bowed in his hands. He was a short, thick-set man with hair somewhat gray, and his attitude showed that he was worn and broken.

I stood for a moment a little fearful of what was before me, but was about to address him when he raised his head and looked at me. It was plain he could scarce believe his eyes,—then, realizing that I was indeed flesh and blood, he rose to his feet and made me a slight bow. Considering the circumstances I have always thought that his courtesy at that moment to a maid who had intruded upon him showed all the traits of a fine gentleman.

I made him a deep curtsey and to forestall the question upon his lips I told him why I was there.

"I have come to ask a favor of your Lordship," I said in as humble a tone as I could command.

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“Is there any one in the land so poor that Cornwallis can do her a favor?” he questioned, his voice so sad that even above my own anxiety I could not but feel a deep pity for him, though at the time I did not know why he was so down-cast.

“You can make me the happiest maid in all the land, an you will, your Lordship,” I answered.

“What is it you wish?” he asked.

“To see my cousin, Captain John Travers,” I replied. “’T is not much, your Lordship. I do not ask that he be let go, but it has been so long since I have seen him and—and—”

“How knew you that he was here?” asked Cornwallis, with a wrinkled forehead.

“I learned it this afternoon, your Lordship.”

“And from whom?”

“From Captain Blundell,” I began, but he cut me short.

“Why, it was he who wished the matter kept so secret,” he insisted. “Where did you see Blundell?”

“Above the town,” I answered. “He was not in uniform and said that he was leaving York-town.”

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"Aye, he's another of the rats that are ready to desert the sinking ship," cried Cornwallis bitterly. "So he told you, did he? I warrant 't was in no spirit of kindness, if I know the man. He asked that Captain Travers's name be kept off the list of prisoners—for some private reason, I doubt not, though he represented that the man had much valuable information that, with patience, could be procured. I have never seen Captain Travers, but I will take this occasion of doing you a service and meeting him at the same time."

He waved me to a chair and going out of the room I heard him shout an order to those below. Then the sound of running men came to me, showing that there were many eager to obey him.

"Be quick about it," were his last words as he came back into the room.

How can I describe the anxiety of those next few minutes? Would they be in time to stop John before he attempted his escape? I hoped against hope.

Lord Cornwallis paced the room a time or two and almost seemed to forget my presence; then he would recollect and make an effort to say

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something pleasant, offering his regrets that I had suffered such prolonged anxiety.

"'T is of course, one of the unfortunate necessities of war," he said, "but all's well that ends well, and at least you will see that your cousin is not dead."

As we talked there came the noise of numerous feet in the hallway below, an order was given, and again Cornwallis left the room.

"Release your prisoner and let him come up alone," he commanded.

It was all I could do to smother the cry of joy that rose in my throat. I had been in time and now I was to see John again. After all I had been through it was as if the dead had come to life.

"Captain Travers," I heard Cornwallis say, "I bid you enter first. There is one there who is most anxious to see you."

I rose to my feet trembling with gladness as I heard the sturdy footsteps approach and with the word "John" on my lips I faced the door; but the name was never spoken, for there entered not John Travers but Mark Powell

CHAPTER XXII

THE SURRENDER OF YORKTOWN

FOR a moment I stood looking at Mark speechless with surprise and growing apprehension; then I found my tongue.

"Where is Captain Travers?" I demanded, giving the boy no greeting in my anxiety for John. "There is some mistake here. They have brought the wrong prisoner."

"Nay, Miss Beatrice," Mark answered, "I am the one they hold as Captain Travers. Do you not know where he is?"

Still I did not understand.

"Captain Travers is here," I insisted; "he is a prisoner," and just then Cornwallis came back into the room and I appealed to him. "Your Lordship, this is not Captain Travers but Mark Powell, a private in his regiment. There is some mistake."

Cornwallis with an exclamation started for the door, but Mark stopped him.

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"Nay, your Lordship, there is no mistake. I am the prisoner you hold as Captain Travers, but as Miss Travers has told you I am only the private, Mark Powell."

"Then where is John?" I cried, for if he were not here I knew not where he could be, and the conviction was growing upon me that, after all, he must be dead.

"Have you heard naught of him?" asked Mark, and 't was plain that he was as anxious as I.

"We have heard nothing since he disappeared from Salem," I answered as calmly as I could.

"But what has Bill Schmuck to say for himself?" inquired Mark.

"We have not seen him either," I returned gloomily, for the mystery was growing deeper. "What do you know of him?"

Mark looked from me to Lord Cornwallis hesitatingly, as if he wanted to speak but dared not before the British general.

"Nay, tell your tale," said his Lordship, "I shall not use it against you, whatever it may be."

"'T is not much of a story," Mark began. "In the battle the captain was hit badly, but Bill and"

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I took him off safe enough to a house near by. He was unconscious, you understand, all the while, but we had hope of him and did what we could. Yet we had scarce gotten him settled when the country folk brought news of a band of Tarleton's stragglers who had come up searching the house for prisoners and would be on us in a minute or two. We knew something, Miss, of the way Tarleton treated his prisoners. 'T was short shrift, usually, for the officers, and so, to save the captain, Bill and I stripped off his uniform and I put it on. 'T was to save him, Miss, you see, for they were less likely to bother with a private."

"'T was a brave deed, very brave, Mark," I cried, and Cornwallis stopped his walk and looked at my substitute, nodded his head up and down in agreement, though he spoke no word.

"Nay, it was my duty to save the captain," Mark went on. "He was of more worth to the cause and, besides, I owed you that and more. Well, it turned out as I hoped it would. The British came and took me for Captain Travers, for I told them that was my name and they had heard it before to their sorrow. The other two

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they thought were just privates. They took all three of us, but they counted not on being chased for twenty miles or more and when it became too hot for them there was talk of putting an end to us all, then and there. This, however, they dared not do, the band being in charge of a sergeant only, but Mr. Travers seemed pretty far gone and they dumped him on the ground, meaning to leave him to die. Soon after Bill Schmuck had a fit, or pretended to have one, and again there was talk of shooting, but it scarce seemed worth while to waste the powder and he was left lying on the road, they being as well satisfied to have none but me to bother with, whom they supposed to be the officer."

"And was Bill about to die?" I broke in upon him.

"Nay, Miss, 't was but a trick of his, I'm sure," he answered, "though it looked bad enough, for he rolled his eyes in a terrible fashion and moaned most awfully. But you see there was little time to parley over the matter. I longed to escape, Miss, and could have slid my wrists through the cords that bound me, for I would give no parole not being what I seemed; but they kept an eye

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on me, and I dared not make the attempt then. Moreover, I had no wish to lead them back to Captain Travers.

"After supper, however, I slipped my hands out of my bonds, for by this time we had come near to the main body of the British and the pursuit had stopped, yet I thought to win back to our own men. But I had ill luck. I was challenged as I went through their lines and followed on horseback. I can run fast, Miss, and escaped them for a while and lay that night in hiding in the woods; but on the morrow they sighted me again and, in the daylight, I could not throw them off. I knew that sooner or later they would catch me, there being six or eight mounted men on my track, and I wanted to get word of Captain Travers to Major McLane but could think of no way of doing it except to send the bit of broken chain I had found in his pocket. This I thought he would recognize as belonging to Captain Jack, and I just rushed into a hut and thrust the coin into the hands of a man there, praying him to take it to the Major. 'T was all I could do. If I had delayed longer and risked their capturing me there, 't is more than likely

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they would have made a prisoner of the man too. So I tore out of the back door and into the woods, where they took me, though they had to put a bullet in my leg before they did it.

"Good lad!" Cornwallis broke in, "but I wager they were not in the best of humor after the chase you gave them."

"You're right," Mark agreed. "They talked of putting an end to me then and there, but thought they would get more credit if they handed me over to Tarleton, while the end would be the same. And so it would have been, but for unexpected interference by an officer named Blundell. He came upon us and, though I suspected that he knew I was not Captain Jack, he said I was, and begged that I be not executed then but held a prisoner in secret. He came again while we were on the march and confirmed my suspicion by telling me he would secure my liberty if I gave him news of where the captain could be found; but that, of course, I refused. Since we've been in Yorktown I've seen him twice; but he has never asked me about the captain, seeming more interested in just being sure I was there than anything else. That's the

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whole story, Miss, and I hope I've done what was right."

"Oh, you have! you have, Mark," I replied, "and I'm very grateful for all you have tried to do, but we are further than ever from John and I know not which way to turn, for now that he is not here, where, oh, where can he be?"

Mark had no answer to my question and we sat for a moment in silence.

"I am sorry, Miss Travers," Lord Cornwallis broke in upon our meditation, "that your coming here has not brought you the relief you had expected. It would have been a pleasure to me to have done you a service while I was yet able, but as that cannot be I will at least show my intention by letting you take this brave lad back to your lines at dawn under a flag of truce."

"Indeed, your Lordship, I thank you for that," I cried, and Mark saluted.

"Ah, my dear young lady," he answered, "'t is naught, as to-morrow will show; but I should like you to feel that, amid all the necessary cruelties of war, those of us who have to inflict such pain and hardship upon our enemies take no joy in it. It would please me greatly if you will believe

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that, were I still able to defy Washington, I would yet be glad to do as I am doing," and he seated himself and took up a pen.

"Your Lordship," I made reply, "I know not quite what you mean but I believe you intend to be kind to us and I thank you for your generosity and courtesy. If I seem not to be properly glad 't is because of the bitter disappointment I suffer at not finding my cousin, though it will be a great pleasure to have Mark Powell back again."

"He did a very brave deed," said Cornwallis; "as a private he ran little risk of his life, whereas to play the officer was courting death, for we deemed it a necessary part of our campaign to deprive our enemy of as many officers as we could come by. It seems a cruel proceeding, no doubt; however we thought it expedient and make no apologies on that score.

"Let us think of pleasanter things. Here is a safe-conduct for you and this young man, who has shown a capacity for more responsibility than is expected of a private and, I doubt not will receive recognition of that when he returns to your army. I have placed no restrictions upon his

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return, so he is quite free to go on fighting so long as he likes and will always have my respect as a brave and resourceful enemy."

With that he handed me the paper with a low bow.

We thanked him as well as we were able and knowing that he would be glad to be alone we left him.

It had been arranged that on the morrow, as soon as it was light, we should be taken to our lines under a flag of truce, but I began to think of the anxiety Mrs. Mummer would suffer on my account and proposed that we return as I had come, for with our safe-conduct no one would stop us.

It was a sad journey, though I tried to express gratitude for all Mark had done, yet I could not be very gay and he, too, was bowed down with the conviction that John could not be in the land of the living. The hope that I had kept bright all this time was beginning to grow dim, and I sat in the boat, silent and heart-broken, as Mark rowed up the river to the beach I had left.

I asked him about his plans to escape and explained how the boat was taken, but he told me

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that this was but an invention of Blundell's, as he had had no thought of making such an attempt. So it was plain that this officer, angered at not getting the map he hoped for, had told me the tale to make me suffer for, as he supposed, breaking my word with him.

We plodded along over the two miles of lane that separated the river and the little house at Halfway and when at last we reached it I was so tired I could hardly lift one foot after the other.

We saw lights burning, showing that there was little sleep within and it was a glad cry that greeted me as I entered, but the good housekeeper, seeing Mark when she expected Master John, was as bitterly disappointed as I had been and seemed to care little what my story was so long as I was back safely.

Mark went off to report to Major McLane, who was on duty with his troop, and I to bed. I cried myself to sleep, worn out with fatigue and heart-broken with my disappointment.

I slept late the next morning and it was near noon when I entered the little dining-room where I found Major McLane awaiting my coming.

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"I have your news from Mark Powell," he said. "You are a brave girl and he is a brave lad. I only wish your efforts had been more successful. I shall be glad to recommend Powell for promotion."

"'T was kind of Lord Cornwallis to set him free," I said, not trusting myself to talk of Jack just then.

"Not so remarkably kind," answered the Major with a sniff. "Considering that Yorktown has surrendered and that the entire garrison will march out and lay down their arms this afternoon. He has but anticipated the lad's liberty by some few hours."

"Oh, now I see why Cornwallis was so upset," I exclaimed. "Nevertheless he would have done it anyway, I am sure, and he treated me most civilly."

"I thank him for that," said the major. "I would always rather think kindly of my enemies than otherwise. Should you like to see the ceremonies of the surrender?" he asked abruptly.

"Yes, I think I would," I answered rather indifferently, but he understood my feeling.

"There is a little hill from which you could

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see it quite well," he explained, "and if you and Peter will go there—"

"Cannot I have Mark?" I asked. "I was so unhappy last night that I could n't think; now there are some questions I would like to ask him if you will let him come."

"Of course you can have him," cried the major heartily. "I shall detail him to look after you. 'T is a duty, Bee, I should not object to myself were it forced upon me, and I doubt not Mark will be glad to get out of the ranks. But don't be down-hearted, little woman," he went on, trying to bring back my courage which was at its lowest ebb; "we're no worse off than we were yesterday. Don't *you* give up hope, who have kept us all in heart. We'll have Jack back yet."

It was kind of Allan McLane, but I knew only too well that he was saying this to cheer me and not at all because he had any faith in his encouraging words; still I tried to smile a little to show that I appreciated his efforts.

The news that Cornwallis had surrendered brought little elation to me at the time. My heart was too sore to feel glad about anything, but I had begun to get back my spirits a little and

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to ponder the events of the evening, and as I had told Major McLane there were one or two things that did not seem easily explainable.

Mark came for me about three o'clock in the afternoon, dressed in a new uniform and looking like the fine brave fellow he was, and together we rode out to a small hill overlooking the road to Hampton where the ceremony of the surrender was to take place.

On the way I spoke of the matters that had been puzzling me.

"Mark," I asked, "why should this man Blundell have saved you?"

"Indeed, Miss Beatrice," he answered, "I've thought of that many a time but no good answer ever came to me. Of course it had something to do with Captain Jack, but just how I can't make out."

"Did he ever talk to you?" I questioned.

"Not when he was alone," Mark replied. "If perchance there was another officer with him he would ask me if I were ready to tell what I knew and when I said I had naught to tell, he would shrug his shoulders as much as to say, 'You see he won't speak,' and then go off. Once when he

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"There's naught here now," he said, after looking at it. "You must have dreamed it, Bee."

"Nay," I answered, "I'll tell you how it happened. After Schmuck had demanded the map, declaring I had it—"

"And it was in that package," the magus cut in; "we have absolute information that 't was wrapped about the English bank notes. 'T was in Varnum's possession and the package was stolen by some Hessians. There's no doubt of that, and I myself saw you with it in your hands."

"That's all true," I replied. "We found the bank-notes just as you say and—"

"What was there around them?" demanded Schmuck.

"This piece of silvered paper," I answered, "but there was no drawing upon it, nor upon the paper outside, nor on the parchment in which the bills were wrapped to keep out the water. At least there was nothing at the time, for John and Bart and I searched diligently. Later, however, on this piece of silvered paper I found a drawing that was without doubt a chart but when I came to look again for it 't was gone. It sounds like a dream, but it is the truth."

THE MAGUS LAUGHS

Major McLane took the paper in his hands and scanned it carefully, only to shake his head, while the magus wrinkled his forehead, as perplexed as any of us. Incredible as my story was, neither doubted that I was telling the exact truth and both were searching for some explanation of it. At last the magus's brow cleared.

"How came the paper to be torn?" he asked eagerly.

"My cousin wanted a piece to use with her curling irons," I explained, "and finding naught else, she tore this sheet and used a portion of it."

"And was the iron hot?" cried the magus.

"To be sure," I answered.

"Then I have the truth of it!" he cried, jumping to his feet in wild excitement. "The map is there! There!" and he pointed a bony finger at the silvered paper. "Fool that I was not to guess it! Fool! Fool! And Varnum knew all the time, for he said to bring everything about the package, but took good care not to tell the secret of it. He would have robbed us all, an he had come by this silvered paper again. 'T was cleverly done and we have been fools."

"Now what is it all about?" demanded Mc-

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Lane. "No doubt you are a fool, but I see no map."

"Give it to me," cried the magus, and taking the two pieces in his hands he bent over the table holding them close beside the flame of the candle. Allan McLane and I had gotten to our feet and were gazing over his shoulder at the two papers and as we looked there appeared, faint at first and then more and more distinct, the outlines of a map that seemed to grow upon the blank surface. Gradually these lines showed stronger and stronger until, when the magus laid them on the table, fitting the torn edges together, there was a perfect map.

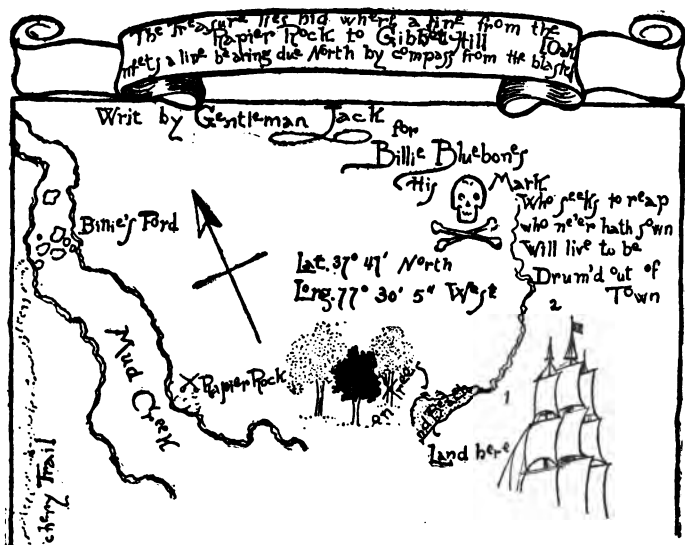
"'T is magic!" I cried.

"'T is sympathetic ink," answered the magus, "and needs but heat to bring it out for a time, after which it disappears again but—but—oh!" he cried, and then staggering back from the table he began to laugh in a high-pitched, shrill voice that shook me with terror.

"Stop it!" cried McLane. "Stop it!"

But the magus reeled about the room like a man distraught and gave forth his horrid laughs until my nerves were wracked.

THE MAGUS LAUGHS



Allan McLane strode over to him, a little upset too, I think, for the magus looked and acted like one who had suddenly lost his mind. He grasped him by the shoulder and with one movement twisted him about and held him at arm's length in front of him.

"Stop that infernal laughing!" he cried, "or I'll choke it off for good."

The magus made an effort but seemed past fear.

"Fools! Fools! All fools!" he cried out

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again, and McLane dragged him to his chair and thrust him into it, determined to solve the riddle.

"Now what is the meaning of this?" he asked.

"Don't you see?" the magus answered, trying to control himself, and laying a hand on the map beside him. "Know you not that for three long years, sleeping and waking, I have dreamed of finding this map? That I've thought of nothing but the treasure I should have when the map came into my possession? That all my strength of mind and body has gone into getting it? Well, here it is! I have come upon it at last. And what do I find? Ha! Ha! Fools! Fools!" He was off again but McLane brought him quickly to his senses.

"Well, and what *did* you find?" he demanded, shaking Schmuck.

"That the treasure has already been lifted," shouted the magus, giving the table a thundering bang with his fist. "I am too late. The treasure has been lifted long since. Hast never heard of the pirate, Billy Bluebones? and the Englishman who was wrecked on the coast of Virginia and stumbled on his hoard? Well, look

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at the map. Look at it!" his voice rose to a shrill scream as he ended.

McLane and I moved to the table and there, sure enough were the words:

"Writ by Gentleman Jack for Billie Bluebones."

There could be no doubt about it. I had heard of this treasure being lifted while I was in England and here was the map, discovered too late to be any service.

"'T is plain enough," said Allan McLane, "but Blundell will—"

At that the magus suddenly remembered his associate.

"And Blundell would have cheated me of it," he cried. "Ah, it will do my eyes good when I see him read it. I'm not the only dupe. Come, let us to him and give him the map! Let us make him pay for it! He'll pay well, too, trust me, and—then—ha! ha!"

But this brought me to my senses. What cared I for treasure and maps? I wanted John and we seemed as far as ever from him.

"And where can we find Blundell?" demanded Allan McLane.

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"I know not," was the answer. "As I told you, they have gone and left no trace."

"You can take us to the house you occupied, however," said Allan.

"Aye, willingly," answered Schmuck. "But I fear it will do little good. Blundell will waste no time now. He is at the end of his tether and, unless we find him soon, 't will be too late."

"He would not dare to kill him!" cried Major McLane.

The magus shrugged. "He's desperate," he answered.

"Powell," ordered the major, and Mark saluted. "Go to the camp and get a dozen mounted troopers and an extra horse for this man Schmuck. I shall expect you all in ten minutes."

Mark was out of the door before the sound of his voice had died.

"What are you going to do?" I demanded.

"I shall take this man to the place and scour the country; I know not what else can be done," he answered, as he tightened his sword-belt and prepared for the ride before him.

"I'm going too," I said, and started out of the room to tell Peter to saddle my horse.

THE MAGUS LAUGHS

"Nonsense!" cried McLane, but I did n't reply, for as the words were on my lips there burst in through the outer door a tall, thin man whom, though I had not seen him for three years, I recognized at once.

It was Bill Schmuck!

CHAPTER XXIV

HURRY! HURRY! HURRY!

I GAZED at the son of the magus for a moment scarce comprehending what his sudden appearance signified, so surprised was I at his entrance. Then, too, he was covered with mud and dust from head to foot and he staggered with fatigue.

He returned my look with bulging, weary eyes but came to his senses quicker than I.

"Oh, Miss Beatrice," he cried in a hoarse voice, "where is Major McLane?"

"He's here, Bill," I answered, but the major was at the door in a moment and 't was well he was, for young Schmuck with a cry of pleasure at sight of him, reeled and would have fallen, had not McLane caught him and held him up.

"What is it?" asked the major.

"Captain Jack," murmured Bill. "He's held captive, and Blundell has given him twenty-four

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hours. Then he'll shoot him. Hurry, oh, please, hurry!"

"Can you take us to the place?" asked the major.

"Yes, yes," answered Bill quickly, "only hurry! It has taken me so long to get here and it's nigh fifteen miles away. Oh, hurry, hurry!"

As I flew to seek Peter I heard McLane shouting to Mrs. Mummer.

"Get something for this boy," he said. "Fill him up as well as you can in three minutes. He's had naught to eat all day."

By that time I had found Peter and seen to it that he was saddling my horse, for I meant to go. I expected opposition from Major McLane but I was equally sure that even his Excellency could not have stopped my going to John that night, now that I had positive news of him.

Back in the little room where I had left them, I found Bill, busy with some food Mrs. Mummer had brought and the major, ready for his ride, regarding the older Schmuck meditatively.

As I entered the room he pointed to the door.

"Get out of my sight," he roared, "and if I ever see you again it will be the worse for you!"

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Don't stop to talk. You've earned some consideration and that's why I tell you to go instead of turning you over to the guard. Right about! March! We've no time to waste on rascals like you," and the magus disappeared as fast as his long legs could carry him, glad enough to be let off.

Major McLane turned and looked at me and knew on the instant that it was my intention to accompany him.

"I see you intend to go with us," he said shortly, for when there was business in hand he wasted no time on polite speeches.

"I must!" I answered. "Have I not earned the right?"

"My child," he replied, "this is n't a question of right or of anything but of getting to John, and that I intend to do with all possible despatch. You know what that means. I go with Bill Schmuck, and naught shall stop my going just as fast as our horses will carry us. I shall have no time to stay for girls, who are out of place on such adventures, but I will see that Powell looks after you whatever happens, so that I need not have you on my mind."

HURRY! HURRY! HURRY!

"That is the way I would have it," I answered, "for although I mean to go, I would not step a foot out of the house if I thought it would delay you."

"Very well," answered the major in his brusquest manner, "I see you are set upon it and would put my orders to naught. Well, you are a strong-minded maid and will have your way in spite of everything and—and, were I in your place, I'd doubtless do the same!" he ended, with a grunt as he pulled on his gauntlets and settled his accoutrements.

At that moment the sound of galloping horses told us that the troopers had come and the major spoke to Bill, still busy with the food.

"Hurry," he cried, "take the chicken-leg and eat it on the way," and all three of us moved out of the room into the night.

Poor Mrs. Mummer stood with her hands together and her mouth agape. Things were moving too swiftly for her and she knew but vaguely what was afoot, but she guessed of course, and stood ready to help and not to hinder.

"We go for Master John," I cried back to her, and though she returned no answer I knew well

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enough there was a prayer on her lips for our success.

Peter had not yet appeared but one shout of, "Peter, you black rascal. Come on!" from the major brought him running.

I was up even before the major was in the saddle and in a moment we were off.

At first the road was plain enough, there being but one good way out of that peninsula on which Yorktown stands, and so I had Bill Schmuck beside me for a while.

"Tell me what it all means?" I begged him as we tore along. "I know everything up to the time you were moved from the place your father saw you last."

"Did he tell you?" he asked, and I answered, "Yes."

"And the major let him go!" cried Bill in astonishment.

"'T was the other, Blundell, was the worst," I suggested.

"Aye, that's right, too, Miss," agreed Bill, "for father would not harm Captain Jack. Nor would he have acted as he has had not this mag-gin of treasure-hunting got into his brain. Oh,

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if we but reach there in time," and he spurred his horse.

"But what happened, Bill?" I asked. "Did Blundell come?"

"Aye, he's there now. Those four villains of his moved us off some five or six miles to a small, deserted house and early this morning Blundell appeared. He put me into a loft upstairs, thinking he had me safe, and I hope he thinks so still. Then he sent his men to a little hut about a hundred yards away."

"And was he alone with Mr. Travers?" I asked in surprise.

"Aye, after the five of them had tied Captain Jack to a chair," answered Bill bitterly. "He'd never trust himself alone with my master on equal terms, be sure of that! Well, Miss, I lay as still as a mouse, upstairs, but the floor was rotten and I could see and hear all that went on below. 'T is the map he wants. 'T is the map he's asked for month after month—and what can the captain tell him? He knows naught of a map, but Blundell will not believe him, nor would my father. They are fair certain he has it, and so Blundell stood there with the captain tied in a

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chair and taking a pistol laid it on the table between them. 'I give you till daylight to-morrow,' he says; that was all; but the man is desperate, and getting rid of my father who opposed him before, showed me he meant to do something; for as I said, he is fair desperate!"

Bill stopped a moment as our horses drew apart, then went on as we came together again.

"'T was then I looked for a way to get out, Miss, and found a little trap leading to the roof. I climbed up and, sliding to the edge, managed to grasp the overhanging branch of a tree. That made it easy to get down without making a noise, which was what I feared most. When I reached the ground I was in two minds what to do. I wanted to go for Blundell, you may believe that, Miss, for though he was armed and I had naught but my two naked hands, I should have liked to be at him; but I dared not do it. If he made an end of me, who would bring the news of Captain Jack? Blundell had an extra pistol and his sword and—well, Miss, it was n't my life I was thinking of, so I started to find news of our soldiers, not daring to trust any of the farmer people who are on the side which seems to have the most

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men, for any of them with the courage of a mouse is in our army already. But I got news that around Yorktown would be the likely place to get help and so I ran on till I came to you."

"'T was fine of you, Bill!" I cried, "but I see no reason for such anxiety. Blundell said tomorrow morning and we'll be there long before that."

"Aye, Miss, that's true enough if he don't miss me," Bill explained, a thing I might have thought of myself. "If he finds me gone, he'll know well enough that I will try to bring help and he will settle the matter sooner. That's what's worrying me, and the major can't go any too fast to please me."

As if to answer his words there came a command from the head of our little company.

"Schmuck, come forward here," and Bill left me to lead the way and give Allan further information as to the lay of the land.

"Powell, drop back to Miss Travers," I heard the next order given, and then in short, sharp sentences, "Men, we begin to ride now. We're going to seek Captain Travers who is held prisoner. And we have n't any time to waste.

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Don't spare your animals. Forward, at the double!"

I heard a murmur of surprise and a muttered sentence or two among the troopers showing that every one of them would be there at the end of the ride if his horse stood up. There was a word to their horses and at the command, "Column right!" from the major, we all plunged into a lane, shaded by overhanging trees and black as night.

We had been going at a good pace before, or so I thought, but this was my first experience with McLane's Light Horse. I saw no faces, saw nothing in fact but an occasional patch of sky showing light through the trees. Before me and behind me I heard the plop, plop, of hoofs, the jangling of arms as they swung to the movement of the horses, their panting breathing and occasionally the muttered word of encouragement of a rider speaking to his animal.

My horse was as good a one as there was in the company. Mummer had sent us off with two of the best in Denewood. I had no fear of its giving out, in fact I had no fear of anything but that we would not arrive in time to save Jack.

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The rush of wind across my face, the hurry and bustle of it all and perhaps, more than anything else, the consciousness that about me were men who would stop at nothing; who, like the one leading us, spoke little and dared everything; all these things served to stimulate me, and in spite of my anxiety, there was a certain elation about this swift and reckless ride that touched something within me and gave me understanding of how Allan McLane and his like rode blindly and gaily, taking their lives in their hands and courting death with joy in their hearts.

On we went at racing speed, mile after mile, with hardly a word uttered. Once, when my horse stumbled slightly, Mark spoke:

"All right, Miss?" he asked a little anxiously.

"All right, Mark," I answered, and we went on as before.

I had not the slightest idea where we were going or through what sort of a country we passed. Had I been familiar with it, it is not likely I would have recognized it, for there was naught to show the lay of the land. On we rushed, now through dense pine woods where our horses picked their own footing, then out for a moment

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into the open with broad fields on each side of us, then into the woods again, where naught was visible but the gray blue sky between the branches of the trees overhead. We climbed several hills without pause or slackening of our pace and rushed down the other side at the same break-neck speed. Once we forded a small stream, but I did not know we were near the water until we were in it and we were out again by the time I realized it. On, on, and the rush and rattle of it began to take on a sort of rhythm until I ceased thinking of anything and but listened to the music of our going.

"Hurry! Hurry! Hurry!" That was the burden of all those many sounds that made up the rush and roar of our progress.

"Hurry! Hurry! Hurry!" The horses galloped it, the sabers struck out the words in unison and so did the panting men and beasts.

"Hurry! Hurry! Hurry!" My heart was beating to the same measure and I lost consciousness of all else, as we tore along, mile after mile, toward him for whose life I would have given my own.

I came to myself with a start.

HURRY! HURRY! HURRY!

"Halt!" was the command, and with a jangle of metal we stopped.

"Now, men," said the major, in an undertone. "No noise. We go at a foot pace and do not wish to warn those we seek. Forward."

On again we rode for perhaps half a mile. Here we dismounted and, tying our horses, went on foot for a quarter of a mile more until we saw the gleaming of a light through a window in a house set back a little from the road.

I had moved ahead and was beside the major, who had Bill on his other hand. He said nothing when he saw me, but I do not think he thought the less of me for taking that ride.

"Where is the hut?" he whispered to Bill.

"'T is above the house," was the answer, and we went on past the light till we discovered another faint gleam among the trees.

"There it is, sir," said Bill.

"Surround the hut and take the men without a sound," the major commanded in an undertone, "and you stay back," he added to me, which I did, for I could see no use in my incumbering the troopers, but I noted that Mark Powell stayed at my side.

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The men moved forward with drawn swords, till I lost sight of them. I heard naught, but of a sudden a broad light showed as the door of the hut was opened and I could see the dark forms of our men as they rushed in upon the unsuspecting inmates.

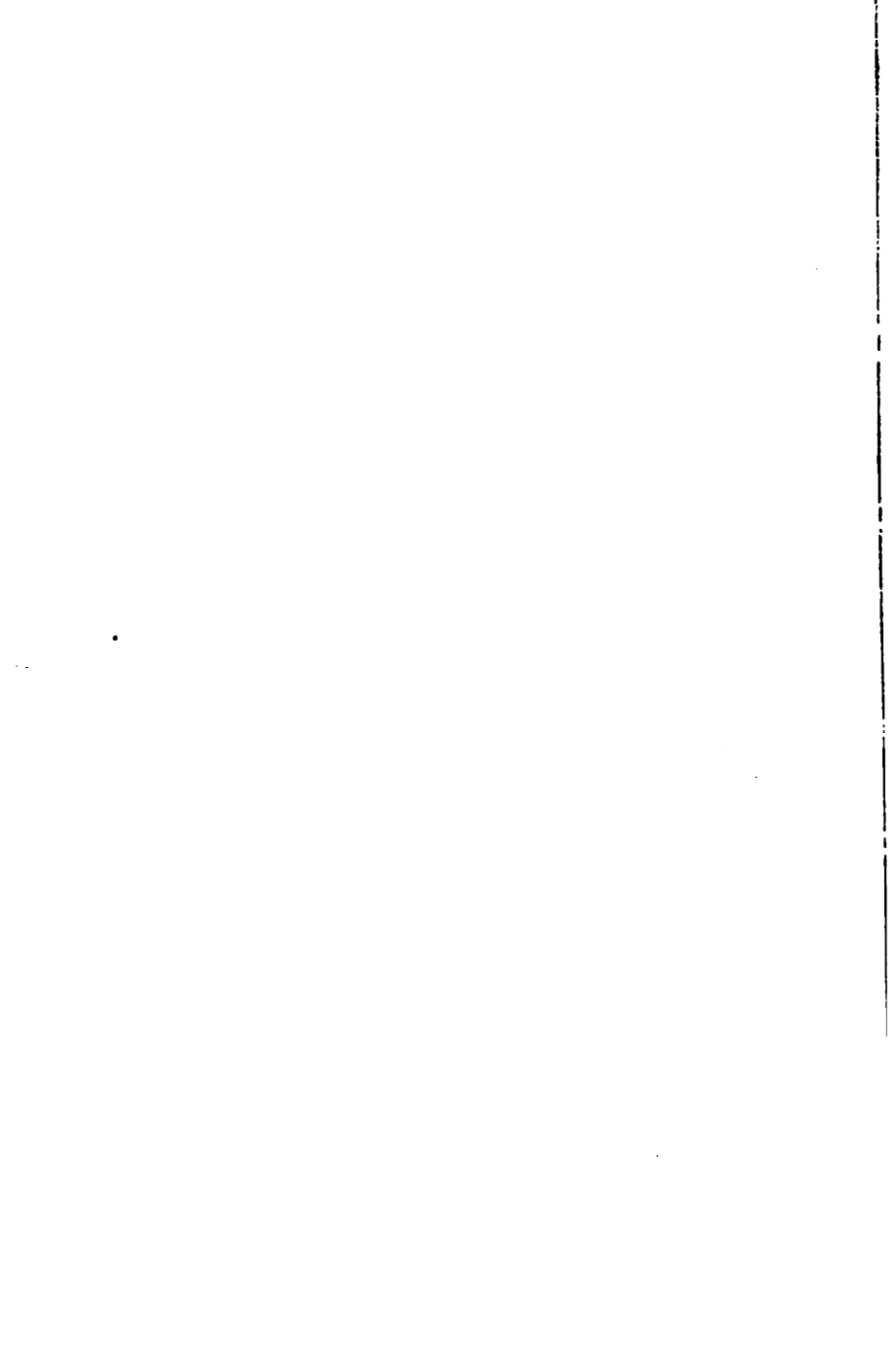
A moment later the soldiers came out, the major's huge figure showing above the others, and all began to move stealthily toward the house. There was only Blundell to deal with now I felt certain, and beside, I could no longer restrain myself. In a moment I was with Allan McLane as he moved swiftly and silently toward the main house.

We heard no sound as we approached and my heart began to beat with apprehension. Perhaps after all we were too late and Blundell had done his worst and gone. I would have run but I feared, as did the major, that in taking the man by surprise he might, in a last desperate effort, shoot John in sheer panic or revenge.

And so we seemed to crawl forward, trying as best we could to pick our way in the darkness, and at last we arrived so near that we heard the sound of talking inside the house.



He leaned half across the table, putting his hand significantly on the pistol



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"Now that your man is gone I have no time to waste," said Blundell, for I knew that voice too well to be mistaken. "I meant to give you till daybreak—well, I can't, now. Tell me, for I'll not ask you again, where is the map?"

Then came John's voice and I thought I should drop with gladness at the sound.

"I've told you a thousand times, man, that I know naught of this map you talk of."

"And I know you have it," Blundell burst out with wrath, and by this time we were at the window and saw all that was within.

John was seated before a table with his back to us, tied hand and foot to his chair, and before him, the glow from the candles lighting up his cruel face, stood Blundell, while on the table between them lay a pistol. I was lost to all sense of my surroundings and knew not that Major McLane had left my side.

"Am I to be balked after all the trouble I have taken?" Blundell was saying. "I'm not fooling now, Travers. Mark that. 'T is now the map or your life, I pledge you my word, for I've gone too far to draw back. Will you give it to me?"

He leaned half across the table putting his

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hand significantly on the pistol as he looked at John, and so intent was he on the answer he awaited that the door was opened and he heard it not.

It was like a play to me, as I saw Allan McLane enter behind Blundell, his pistol before him, so that he might forestall any dangerous move upon the other's part, and John saw him too, for while the British officer menaced him with death, he suddenly threw up his head and laughed aloud at the top of his voice. This evidently hid the sound of Allan's approach, for Blundell knew naught of it.

"Oh, you laugh, do you?" he cried in a bitter voice. "You laugh, you insolent rebel! Well, we'll have an end of laughing now," and he would have lifted the pistol, but Allan McLane was upon him, and a great hand clutched him at the back of the neck and swung him around in a twinkling.

"You dog!" cried the major, and his voice boomed through the house. "You dog! Fighting your private battles while you are drawing pay from his Majesty, King George of England! Were there many like you in his army, this war

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of ours would never have lasted a year. Dog!" he ended, and he flung Blundell from him into the hands of his troopers who had followed him in.

And all the while John was laughing. Tied as he was to the chair, laughing as though he had never seen anything so funny in his life.

"Well, what are you roaring at?" cried McLane, as he crossed the room to loosen Jack's bonds. "There's naught funny about it, and if you'd been searching high and low for a man for nigh on six months, thinking him dead and then found him, would you laugh?"

But this only made John laugh the more.

"Oh, Allan," he stuttered between his bursts of mirth, "if you could have seen yourself, tip-toeing in. Oh, oh! You are so big that 't was like a black bear dancing a minuet."

The major stood up with a great frown on his face as if he were much offended.

"So that's the gratitude you have for me, is it? I look like a bear dancing a minuet, do I? Well, sir, suppose you sit right where you are until you get over your feeling of jollity," and he walked toward the door, nodding to the troopers to go out and take their prisoners with them.

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John, still tied, became grave in a minute.

"Oh, I say, Allan," he cried, "you're not offended, really? 'T was the finest sight I ever saw in my life when you stepped in at the door there. Come now, let me loose."

"Nay," answered McLane at the threshold, "bears are bad hands at untying knots, and as for fine sights you'll see a finer one before you're loose," he added with a great show of anger.

"Have done with your fooling," cried John, but McLane was out and at my side by this.

"In to him," he whispered in my ear, and thrust a knife into my hands. "I wager he won't call you a bear, the ungrateful young puppy! But Bee," he added, "he's all right I think, and not harmed by his confinement. 'T is good to see him, hey?" and all the love Allan McLane had for John Travers was in those words.

He was still calling aloud for Allan as I entered the room and stood for a moment in the doorway.

"Bee, is it you?" he said, in an awed voice, as if he were not sure, and then, being sure, he cried out to me. "Oh, Bee, Bee, you have come back to me."

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I crossed the room and cut the ropes and he was on his feet looking down at me with my hands in his.

"What brought you here?" he asked a little tremulously.

"Do you have to ask?" I answered, but hurried on. "They told me you were dead, Jack, but I would not believe them and came to America to find you. They were all sure you were dead, even Allan McLane, but when your piece of the lucky sixpence came to me—"

"Then you have it?" he cried.

"Yes, Mark found it in your coat pocket," I answered.

"Then will you give it back to me?" he begged. "Don't you remember, Bee, Admiral Howe said that when the pieces were again parted two should be made one?"

"Yes," I whispered. "I remember."

"And do you know now, what he meant?" Jack went on, his voice low and earnest.

I could not speak, but nodded "yes," looking up at him, and in my face he saw what I had no wish to hide, and so he took me in his arms and kissed me.



